



A warm welcome to the first edition of Lymphoedema Wales, your National Lymphoedema Newsletter!

Included are stories, news and reports of service developments from each of the Lymphoedema Services across Wales. This will give you an idea of the wonderful work that is taking place near to you. Telephone numbers for all the services can be found at the back of the newsletter. If you have any queries please make contact with your local lymphoedema service.

Thank you to all the lymphoedema staff for submitting to this first Newsletter. We hope you enjoy the write ups and share the work that is being achieved.

With kind regards,  
Cheryl and Karen

## Foreword

Lymphoedema services in Wales have dramatically changed over the last few years and this is due to the hard work of key individuals, most especially Eilish Lund, who has now retired blissfully in France knowing that she has laid the foundation for patients to access lymphoedema services throughout Wales.

We have been fortunate with support from Welsh Government and the Programme Management Unit in taking lymphoedema into a strategic direction.

I am delighted with this the first newsletter - Lymphoedema Wales - which showcases what we have achieved in such a short space of time. Congratulations and well done to all those involved, but remember, this is just the beginning!

Kind regards,

**Melanie Thomas MBE**  
**National Clinical Lead Lymphoedema**  
**Welsh Government**

## All Wales Lymphoedema Network Group

The All Wales Lymphoedema Network Group was set up in 2011 following the £1 million investiture into implementing the Welsh Government Lymphoedema Strategy (2009). This Group is a led by Fiona Jenkins (Executive Director of Therapies and Health Sciences, Cardiff and Vale UHB), Chief Executive of Lymphoedema Services on behalf of the NHS Chief Executives; Melanie Thomas, National Lymphoedema Clinical Lead who is directing the implementation of the Strategy, Jane Fitzpatrick, Programme Director, Programme Management Unit / Strategic Programmes, and Claire Thomas, Programme Manager, Strategic Programmes and Health Board Network Leads.

The All Wales Lymphoedema Network Group has been established to maintain a strategic oversight of the Strategy for Lymphoedema in Wales “Designed for Lymphoedema” and will:

- Oversee the planning of services for NHS Wales, ensuring the recommendations in the Strategy are implemented locally;
- Oversee clinical education and training requirements for the network area;
- Advise on how Health Boards should respond to strategic developments as they arise;
- Provide the source of composite advice of Health Boards to Welsh Government when required;
- Advise on allocation of funding as services change or as funding arrangements change;
- Provide Welsh Government, Health Boards and relevant Boards/ Committees with an overview of activities, responsibilities and performances associated with the delivery of Lymphoedema services to cancer and non cancer patients across the Health Boards;
- Review progress, agreeing any necessary actions required to ensure that key milestones and timescales are met;
- All Lymphoedema patients have access to Lymphoedema services for assessment and management as per the £1million allocation.

Individual Health Boards (and Velindre NHS Trust) will remain responsible for the delivery of services locally, and Chief Executives will retain accountability for local service delivery.

## **Congratulations to Melanie!**

Fiona Jenkins, Chair of the All Wales Lymphoedema Network Group, would like to inform all colleagues of how proud we all are of Melanie Thomas (Lewis), who has been awarded an MBE in the recent national awards. This is testimony to Mel's leadership and passion for improving services for Lymphoedema which all of Wales has benefitted from, and now has the much deleveraged national recognition...well done Mel!

## **National Lymphoedema Roundup**

With the funding from Welsh Government in 2011, lymphoedema services have been set up throughout Wales to ensure equity of access and care for all people with lymphoedema/chronic oedema, regardless of the cause. Melanie Thomas (nee Lewis), the National Clinical Lymphoedema Lead for Wales has worked tirelessly with the various Health Boards in setting up new lymphoedema services and ensuring established services were able to provide the required level of care according to the All Wales Lymphoedema Strategy published in 2009.

In an effort to support the aims and objectives of the Strategy, a National Lymphoedema Education and Research Specialist role was created with Karen Morgan and Cheryl Pike being appointed a job share.



*Karen, Melanie and Cheryl*

A breakdown of the work that has taken place over the last six months is summarised below:

### **Education**

One of the first roles was to develop education courses that would be accredited and would recognise the level of skill and knowledge that participants would be achieving. Newly accredited

modules for the management of lymphoedema have been, and continue to be created in collaboration with Agored Cymru. The modules that have run thus far include Skin Care, Simple Lymph Drainage, Key Worker Skills for the Management of Chronic Oedema, Lower Limb Multi-Layered Bandaging (MLLB), Upper Limb MLLB and Exercise in Lymphoedema.

To date 27 lymphoedema staff have successfully completed the Simple Lymph Drainage (SLD) module and 14 lymphoedema assistant staff have completed the Skin Care module; all staff have passed their assessment and are awaiting their certificates of accreditation.

Future courses being planned include Casley-Smith Manual Lymphatic Drainage (MLD), Update in MLD, Specialist Skills for Head & Neck, Breast, Gynae and Obesity related Lymphoedema; Compression Garments, Advanced Assessment Skills and an exciting opportunity for patients and carers to do a module called *Living with Lymphoedema*.

### **All Wales Lymphoedema Service Survey**

In October and November 2012, an All Wales Lymphoedema Service Survey was undertaken and the results were presented at the 'Sharing Good Practice' study day in Bridgend in April 2013. This survey was a trial for future audit purposes but it did demonstrate the excellent work the various services are doing. Of the 591 forms that were returned for evaluation, 24 forms had to be excluded as the incorrect forms had been issued; thus 567 forms were audited. Some of the results from the audit include:

- 82% of people did not have difficulty accessing their lymphoedema service
- 96% answered that lymphoedema had been explained to them
- 60% of people knew what the risk factors were to developing lymphoedema
- 96% stated that the management of lymphoedema was explained to them

- 83% of people felt it was 'very easy' to follow the advice given by their therapist; 10% felt it was 'easy'

Have you received any of the following?	Yes	No	N/A
1. Skin care advice	86%	3%	1%
2. Exercise, movement and activity advice	81%	5%	3%
3. Simple Lymph Drainage (SLD) (self-massage)	64%	16%	6%
4. Garment care	74%	5%	7%
5. Weight management advice	59%	16%	12%

Lymphoedema bandaging and lymphoedema care plans have been designed to aid staff and carers in assisting patients manage their lymphoedema. We are awaiting final approval from the Lymphoedema National Network prior to dissemination across the country.

Lymphoedema management leaflets are in the final stages of redrafting prior to approval by Public Health Wales for printing.

As part of their National role, Melanie, Karen and Cheryl provide clinical support and supervision to all services. Those services having had this support have reported positive feedback and all have requested future dates for these sessions.

### Pop-Ups



14 informative pop-ups have been printed and distributed to all lymphoedema services across Wales as an educational and promotional tool. Plans to audit the effectiveness of these

pop-ups are being discussed and each service will have the freedom to decide on the format of the audit they would like to perform. We look forward to finding out what impact these pop-ups will have on patients and staff!

### Standardisation of Lymphoedema Services

As part of ensuring all clinics provide equitable services, policies and procedures are being drafted for the various skills and equipment currently being used within the services. These include:

- Measuring Limb Volumes to Determine Lymphoedema Outcome
- Lymphoedema Vascular Assessment Policy (Toe Brachial Pressure Index / TBPI)
- Lymphassist Protocol for Lymphoedema
- THOR Laser Protocol for Lymphoedema
- Deep Oscillation Protocol for Lymphoedema
- Management Strategy for Lymphoedema Patients with a Body Mass Index (BMI) equal or greater than 30 kg/m<sup>2</sup>

### Independent Prescribing

Currently there are 3 independent prescribers in Wales which has contributed to a comprehensive and timely treatment for patients. As we all know the current system in prescribing garments utilising General Practitioners and Pharmacies is proving challenging. To rectify this we have had a series of meetings with the Welsh Medicines Management Group and the Community Pharmacy Wales Group, looking at improving the system throughput.

A pilot has commenced in ABM UHB where 2 independent nurse prescribers are issuing prescriptions for garments, antibiotics and bandages direct for patients to take to their pharmacy. This is taking the GP practice out of the system. This pilot is in its infancy; however definite improvements can already be seen.

The plan for the near future is that each health board lymphoedema service will train staff so that each service will have an independent nurse prescriber within their team.

### Paediatric Services

An audit of paediatric lymphoedema patients is underway. We currently have in excess of 30 children with lymphoedema in Wales. A new protocol for management is being created with support from the Community Children's Nurses.

Meetings and presentations have occurred with the All Wales Community Children's Nurses and Welsh Government officials for paediatrics, and further work is underway.

The long term goal is a dedicated Lymphoedema Paediatric Specialist.

### **Welsh Compression Formulary**

We have been working extremely closely with shared procurement services and SMTL in creating a tender document as well as an evaluation which is robust and patient focused. In the forthcoming months the tender process will commence which will enable us to formulate the National Lymphoedema Formulary. This will ensure that patients are having the best products and the NHS will be purchasing at the best price.

## **Round-Up from Services across Wales**

### **Aneurin Bevan Health Board**

The lymphoedema service is based at St Woolos Hospital, Newport which means patients suffering from lymphoedema/chronic oedema can now have access to expert care and a high quality service.

A spokesperson said that, "Aneurin Bevan Health Board have established and will improve dedicated lymphoedema services in their localities to ensure patients receive the right treatment at the right time by the right professional in the right place".

### **Wellbeing Day**

Aneurin Bevan Lymphoedema Service was established in the autumn of 2011 and provides treatment for all types of lymphoedema. They recently held a Health and Wellbeing Day for patients attending the Lymphoedema Clinic at St



Woolos Hospital, Newport.

Sister Kim Wyness said "The patients really enjoyed the day; we invited 25 people to the unit and we offered them massage treatments, facials, skincare workshops and relaxation techniques throughout the day."



"We also had speakers at the event talking about how to reduce stress, tips for a good night's sleep and how to reduce the risk of infection."

During the day, ten patients signed up to a new walking group which started in April; although the nursing staff are already walking three times a week at lunchtime. The group is called 'Walk With Us' and has been funded by the cancer charity, Tenovus. Staff from the clinic also walked across the Severn Bridge in their onesies! in May to raise funds for the St David's Foundation.



### **Betsi Cadwaladr (North Wales) Lymphoedema Service**

The last year has seen interesting changes with the retirement of Eilish Lund (happily living in France without a care in the world!) and Wrexham Clinic moving into their new accommodation. We have welcomed new members of staff and really consolidated the existing North Wales team, meeting regularly to share ideas, case presentations from staff members and peer reviewing, taking the service for North Wales ever forward.

The pace of service improvement has been rapid and we have as a group, been able to take advantage of 3M training - a subsequent audit of the efficacy of this new bandaging system is being done - Kinesio Taping and MLD updating. All of this activity adds to our existing practice and provides extra management options for the patients

sometimes combining the more established management options with exciting new ones!

All clinics are now equipped with a Deep Oscillation® Hivamat® and there are 3 THOR lasers circulating within North Wales, thanks to some very generous donations of money. These pieces of equipment are being tested to the maximum to investigate the most effective treatment protocols for our patients.

There has been exciting advancement of the existing weight management clinic in Wrexham with input from Dr. Richard Corney, Consultant Psychologist, which is being audited to assess its strengths and evaluate how best to move this very important aspect of Lymphoedema management forward.

In the future - hopefully not too far away now - two of the clinics currently in Glan Clwyd and St. David's Hospice, Llandudno, will move to new accommodation in order that services can be truly multidisciplinary and work with other Allied Health Professionals such as Physiotherapy, Tissue Viability, District Nursing, Occupational Therapy and Podiatry. This collaborative working is harnessing the expertise of all these services to achieve greatest benefit for each of the services and maximises patient management, because as we all know, Lymphoedema rarely comes alone.

Satellite clinics for those in rural areas have been commenced and there is now access for Anglesey patients to be seen at Cefni; and for those from Dolgellau, a satellite clinic is held at Allt Wen. Looking to the future with a service moving from St. David's Hospice, Llandudno, there has been a satellite clinic established at Llandudno General Hospital every Friday morning 9am-12pm, so that patients East of Bangor up to Llandudno and down to Pentrefoelas only need travel as far as Llandudno; keeping travelling time to under 30 minutes to a clinic.

With so much that has happened in a year it is difficult to do everything we have done justice, and

we as a team are looking forward to the next twelve months to see what it will bring.

## **Velindre NHS Trust**

Work for the proposed repatriation of the Velindre Cancer Centre Lymphoedema Service to the Cardiff and Vale, Aneurin Bevan and Cwm Taf Health Boards is ongoing. The new proposed date for the repatriation is 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013. In the interim new cancer related lymphoedema clinics have been under development through collaboration with the various health boards. A qualified staff clinic based in Whitchurch Hospital for Cardiff and Vale patients commenced in April 2013; and qualified and support worker clinics in Dewi Sant Hospital for Cwm Taf patients will commence on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2013.

Following a service review audit that was completed in February 2013, alterations to service delivery have been implemented to ensure that standards of care are enhanced and waiting times are reduced. These have included dedicated new patient clinics both in one to one and group format. The new patient groups will take place on the Tenovus Mobile Unit and an audit of the effectiveness of new patient assessment, and comparison of group versus individual assessment is about to commence. It is hoped that this work will ensure that patients are seen sooner for their initial assessment and that the service being delivered is as effective as possible.

A further audit that has been completed recently is regarding the information patients know about lymphoedema following treatment for breast cancer. This audit was completed to support the collaborative work being undertaken with Cwm Taf, Cardiff and Vale and Aneurin Bevan Health Boards and Breast Cancer Care for the development of Lymphoedema Prevention for Breast Cancer patients. The results demonstrated that 48% patients felt they were informed of breast cancer related lymphoedema pre-operatively and 61% felt they were given information post-operatively. Although we know breast care nurses provide all patients with lymphoedema advice, this evidence

suggests that patients are not recalling or remembering this information and supports the need for development of further lymphoedema prevention intervention.

## **Cardiff & Vale University Health Board A ST DAVIDS DAY TO REMEMBER!!**

Friday March 1st, 2013 saw the launch of the new Lymphoedema Service in Cardiff & Vale University Health Board (UHB).



The NEW clinic has been established to provide advice, help and support for people with lymphoedema living within Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan; and it is proving a success. The clinic has already helped hundreds of patients and has recently enjoyed an official opening ceremony.

Fiona Jenkins, the Director of Therapies for Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, said: "The new therapist led Lymphoedema Service is based in a newly refurbished department at Whitchurch Hospital and has been set up in line with the Welsh Government's Lymphoedema Strategy.

"There are already more than 250 people making regular use of the service which is helping to improve their quality of life in a number of ways and I would like to thank everyone involved in setting up the service for a job well done."

The service is aimed at non-cancer related lymphoedema patients and as a prevention service for cancer patients whose treatment may increase their risk of developing lymphoedema.

Treatments that are offered consist of a combination of skin care advice, movement and exercise information, compression (garments and multi-layer lymphoedema bandaging) and lymphatic drainage techniques.

The clinic works in collaboration with other services within the UHB to ensure the patient receives

appropriate holistic care that is required to manage this chronic condition.

Tanya Ball, the clinical lead for the lymphoedema service, said: "The new service has been very well received by patients. It is making a real difference to their care and helping to manage the condition."

Service users Jacqueline Rattray and Nadir Robani were invited to the launch, both expressing their sincere gratitude for this new service and the benefits they have gained from receiving treatment at the Whitchurch Clinic.



*Jacqueline and Nadir officially open the clinic*

### **MAKING A DIFFERENCE**

Since January 2012 the new lymphoedema service at Cardiff & Vale UHB have been working hard to improve the lives of those people in the Cardiff & Vale area who are living with Lymphoedema. As we know, current statistics report that lymphoedema affects around 6,000 people in Wales and has an emotional, as well as a physical, impact on the individuals living with this chronic condition. Following the initial set up of the service which involved visiting people at their own homes (and moving offices three times!) the team of five have been based at their new clinic in Whitchurch Hospital since September 2012 and continue to make a difference to patients lives.

Many patients treated at the clinic have been able to make lifestyle changes with the advice and support provided by all levels of staff at the clinic.

One patient felt that the new service has "changed his life", and receiving a letter for treatment was "like Christmas day"! Since undergoing a course of multi layer lymphoedema bandaging this gentleman is now self managing his condition with skin care, attending the gym and use of compression garments.



The treatment has made such a difference to his life that following 8 years of being unemployed he stopped receiving benefits and has been phased back into full time employment.

Another success story of a young lady, referred to the clinic by her tissue viability nurse, has also successfully undergone lifestyle changes. She now has a more positive outlook on her everyday life. Personal hygiene needs were addressed along with weight management issues. Together with support from the community resource team and treatment which included a course of bilateral below knee lymphoedema bandaging she has lost five stone in five months. This weight loss was aided by the loss of 8 litres of fluid from each leg during her intensive treatment phase. With assistance from her father she has continued her self-management regime and weight loss plan with the hope of losing more weight.



*Pre- and post-bandaging (MLLB)*

Of the more than 250 patients that have been seen at the Whitchurch Clinic, these are only two examples of the impact this new service is having on peoples' lives. The team as a whole continue to strive to spread the "Lymphoedema" word and improve patient's lives.

## **Cwm Taf Health Board**

Cwm Taf Health Board Lymphoedema Service was successfully launched in November 2012 with the Health Board's Deputy Chair opening the service. Since commencing the service Cwm Taf Lymphoedema team now has 140 patients on its caseload.

Karen Wingfield, the clinical lead for



the lymphoedema service said, "Since we started we have moved our clinics in the north of the Health Board from the old St Tydfil's Hospital to the purpose built Keir Hardie Health Park, Merthyr Tydfil, where the clinic rooms are spacious and very suited to seeing our patients". Clinics are held across two sites: Pontypridd and Merthyr Tydfil.

Various education and training events have taken place including a training day for Practice Nurses and District Nurses in March and May 2013. Presentations to the Cancer Multi-Disciplinary Teams, GP practices, Continuing Professional Development Forums and podiatry services have also been held. Forthcoming talks will be for the community podiatry teams, practice manager forums and the District Nurse team leader meetings.

Exciting new service developments have been commenced including:

- Joint complex leg clinics are being held with Tissue Viability Nurses (TVNs) every 4 months. In between these clinics the TVNs and podiatrists attend clinics if there is need for a joint treatment plan with each of these specialist services.
- Diane Jehu, Lymphoedema Nurses, is leading on educational sessions for the Prevention of Lymphoedema following Breast Cancer treatment which commences in May 2013, and will be held alternatively between the Pontypridd base and Merthyr Tydfil clinics.
- Wendy Dury, Lymphoedema Assistant, is hosting classes to teach Simple Lymph Drainage which is an important self-massage to aid in the management of lymphoedema.

Karen Wingfield says "A big thank you to all colleagues, patients and the public for your ongoing support, patience and tolerance whilst we have been setting up our services!"

## **Hywel Dda Health Board**

Hywel Dda Lymphoedema Service provides a service to the entire population of Hywel Dda in whatever environment suits an individual's needs at

that point in time - the service has the flexibility to adapt and treat a patient in any environment from inpatients, outpatients, satellite clinics, community, multi-disciplinary joint visits or clinics.

The overall clinical objective of all services is to prevent hospital admissions by promoting and facilitating self management, patient education, and Health Care Professional awareness and education. Treatment interventions are directed towards ensuring maximal independence and self-management.

Each of the 3 services provide their service to meet the needs of that population: - for example, the Ceredigion Lymphoedema Service commenced officially in September 2011 with funding via the Welsh Assembly Governemnt; in line with this, the service has a strong community link and aims to provide a service as close to the patient's home as necessary.

There are currently 1195 patients across the Health Board receiving active treatment, and during the period April 2012 to March 2013, 550 new patients were seen. From the data on lymcalc we did a snapshot of people's Body Mass Index (BMI) levels and below is a table showing average percentage number of patients on the active caseload who have a BMI of over 30:

### Patient Obesity Levels

Region	Percentage of BMI >30
Carmarthenshire	40%
Pembrokeshire	62%
Ceredigion	51%
<b>Hywel Dda Average</b>	<b>51%</b>

We are currently treating a lady with a BMI of 97 which has proven extremely challenging! However, through bandaging her right leg twice a week over 3 weeks, we have been able to reduce her limb volume from 38,363 litres to 19,460 litres - this equates to a loss of fluid of 3 stone in weight!

There were obviously immediate positive implications with this excellent outcome in that she had better movement of the leg, her activities of daily living were easier to perform, and the goal of treatment is to enable the lady to sit in her wheelchair. Once this has leg reduction has been stabilised, we plan to bandage her left leg.

Service developments for the Health Board include:

- Prevention and Support Groups: the new Tenovus Mobile Unit will host the Lymphoedema Prevention across the 3 counties in the near future. We also envisage that hydrotherapy courses and Tenovus Walk With Us groups will be established and introduced across the 3 counties.
- Welsh translation recording for Simple Lymph Drainage: the lymphoedema assistant working in Ceredigion is to undertake this task because the Ceredigion locality has a high population of welsh speakers, and she feels strongly that it is very important to develop a welsh language description of SLD for these patients. This will be done in a professional recording studio and CDs will be leant to our patients.
- Lymph-Assist clinics have been set up throughout the 3 counties with good results.
- National Talks and Presentations: The Lymphoedema Service Lead in collaboration with the Head Nuclear Medicine Radiographer presented a study in the use of lymph-assist at the British Lymphology Society's (BLS) Annual Conference in October 2012. The Ceredigion team are to do a joint presentation on 'Excellence in Collaborative Work' with Dr. Rowlands (GP) and the Practice Nurse based in Brynmeddyg Surgery, Llanybydder, recognising the fantastic development of Multi-Disciplinary Team working in the community setting.
- Pembrokeshire lymphoedema service is currently partaking in a joint audit with the Cancer Bank Clinical Nurse Specialists to look at numbers of patients with IDC (invasive ductal carcinoma) that are referred on to the service. The results will hopefully be presented jointly as a poster in 2013/14.



## **Powys Lymphoedema Service**

Powys Lymphoedema Service was established in December 2011 with Delia Keen and Elizabeth Coveney sharing the Lymphoedema Clinical Lead post, and supported by Karen Jones, the Lymphoedema Assistant.

Accommodation for the service has been challenging, however in April 2012 the service was able to set up base in Builth Wells Community Hospital, mid-Powys. A satellite clinic has also been established in North Powys based at Llanidloes Hospital. Powys is currently in the middle of reorganising how services are being delivered and as a consequence the service base will soon have to move from Builth Wells, however, as yet, there is no indication as to where a suitable alternative base may be found.

Since December 2011 the service has received 191 referrals, of which 137 are on the active caseload, and 11 on the waiting list (the longest waiting time is less than 4 weeks). Patients have been repatriated from Hereford Lymphoedema service and Usk House (a Charity service based in South Powys), and stronger links are being built with the Bracken Trust (a Charity service based in mid Powys). The aim in the next few months is to set up a referral process for patients needing 'lymphoedema prevention' advice and support following cancer treatment. This will be quite a challenge as Powys patients receive treatment for cancer at Velindre and Swansea, but also Shrewsbury, Gloucester, Hereford, Birmingham and Liverpool!

We have used Juxta Cures with 3 patients as an alternative to bandaging when there has been ulceration present. The case study below is to be published in a Nursing Journal during June 2013.



April 2012



April 2013

Strong links have been established with the District Nursing teams through the weekly Leg Clubs taking place across Powys. On the back of this, a Link Nurse/ Key Worker group has been set up and they meet twice yearly to keep up to date with service developments and training. These nurses take the lead within their teams for collaboratively providing care, particularly with toe bandaging and Multi-Layered Lymphoedema Bandaging (MLLB), and recognising when a referral to the lymphoedema service is required.

The lymphoedema service leads have both been involved with teaching on the Palliative Care Masters Level Module, a University course which is held in Powys. Delia has also presented to the Powys Clinical Effectiveness Committee about the work of the new lymphoedema service.

Our congratulations to both Delia and Elizabeth for completing their Masters Degrees! They are an inspiration to all their colleagues!

## **Abertawe Bro-Morgannwg University Health Board (ABM UHB) Lymphoedema Service**

ABM UHB provides lymphoedema services to all those living in Swansea, Neath, Port Talbot and Bridgend localities. Although the base is at Singleton Hospital, Swansea, the team provides in-patient services to all hospitals; we hold clinics on the Tenovus Mobile Unit in Bridgend, and we work collaboratively with the community, tissue viability and dermatology nurses for those patients less able to travel to a hospital or clinic site.

From November 2012 the majority of breast surgery has moved to Neath Port Talbot hospital which forced the team to re-think their pre- and post-operative care for the Lymphoedema Prevention and Rehabilitation Scheme. We have employed two Band 4 Lymphoedema Assistant Practitioners who have been fully trained to provide this level of care, and to date the feedback has been very positive from the patients, and the team have fully integrated this new pathway. In this new

venture we have seen our caseload of Breast Cancer patients double since then!



*Kaja Hopper and Susan Pugh – our Band 4 Assistant Practitioners!*

Complex clinics/ joint working were set up in Neath Port Talbot in 2010. Since then 117 patients have been managed collaboratively, 89 are now maintained in compression hosiery and their wounds have healed. Collaborative working not only provides the patients with a seamless, efficient pathway of care, but also supports the sharing of knowledge and education between specialities. As a result of the cost effectiveness of our initial joint clinic we have established this within other areas locally and have successfully run clinics in Pencoed.

Primary Care antimicrobial guidelines now include cellulitis guidance for patients with Lymphoedema / Chronic Oedema: "Patients with lymphoedema/chronic oedema presenting with cellulitis may require antibiotics for 14 days or longer" (this reflects the guidance within the BLS/LSN Cellulitis Document). ALL patients with lymphoedema/chronic oedema and cellulitis should be referred to the Lymphoedema Service.

Independent prescribing project will commence 1<sup>st</sup> June – this is a pilot study where the two independent prescribers will prescribe all garments on FP10 instead of issuing GP recommendation forms. This is aimed at reducing the delay in obtaining garments, ensuring the correct garment are issued and so reduce waste and improve the service for the patients.

Tenovus performed an audit of the use of the mobile unit which showed that patient activity and referrals have doubled over the last year, and that the number of non-attendance (UTA/DNA) of patients has significantly reduced since holding

clinics in Bridgend. We now hold two clinics a month in the Bridgend locality, which are fully subscribed and a waiting list for appointments is being carefully monitored.

We also hold Breast Cancer Lymphoedema Prevention and Rehabilitation sessions on the Tenovus Mobile Unit at Morrisons, Morfa (Swansea) and at Morrisons, Baglan (Port Talbot); and there are plans afoot to hold a session in Bridgend in the near future.

As part of one of the Agored Lymphoedema Management modules, a patient was advised to perform daily skin care and was given simple exercises to build thigh muscle strength and improve mobility until multi-layered bandaging (MLLB) could be performed. Below are photos of the patient at his assessment, and the 'after' photo showing the improvement of his skin condition and the dramatic change in limb shape in the two weeks from his assessment until the start of the MLLB! It just goes to show how effective our advice is when patients take it on board the basics of looking after their skin and taking on a more active lifestyle.



Before



After

Continuing professional development is actively encouraged in the team and Jodie has now passed first year of her Master's degree. Melanie is hard at work with her Doctoral Programme, and Cheryl is about to embark on her Doctoral Programme come October 2013! Rebecca is due to do her Casley-Smith MLD training which will be shortly followed by her independent prescriber's course in September 2013!

Up and coming events for the ABM UHB Lymphoedema Service:

- The majority of the team will be running, walking and probably crawling as part of a Health Board initiative to get the staff moving! We are naming

ourselves the 'Lymphomaniacs' and hope to all cross the 10 kilometre walk/run/jog in Llanelli on 30<sup>th</sup> June.

- In an effort to promote Lymphoedema Awareness and provide education for our patients, we will be holding a ***“Lymphoedema and Me”: a patient information day*** on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2013 at Margam Park, Port Talbot.

STOP the PRESS: we have just had formal confirmation that the ABM UHB lymphoedema team have now been adopted by Macmillan Cancer Support! We have also been short listed for the Macmillan Team Award! Go Team!

## Lymphoedema Service Contact Details

Health Board	Base	Telephone
Aneurin Bevan	St. Woolos Hospital, Newport	01633 238464
Abertawe Bro-Morgannwg UHB	Singleton Hospital, Swansea	01792 285252
Betsi Cadwaldr	Wrexham Maelor Hospital, Wrexham	01978 726257
Cardiff & Vale	Whitchurch Hospital, Cardiff	02920 336176
Cwm Taff	Dewi Sant Hospital, Pontypridd	01443 443499
Hywell Dda - Carmarthenshire	Prince Phillip Hospital, Breast Unit, Llanelli	01554 783370
Hywell Dda - Ceredigion	Bronglais General Hospital, Aberystwyth	01970 628858
Hywell Dda - Pembrokeshire	Withybush General Hospital, Haverfordwest	01437 773053
Powys	Builth Wells Community Hospital, Builth Wells	01982 554331

Melanie, Karen and Cheryl can be contacted at Singleton Hospital, Swansea; 01792 285252.

Hope you enjoyed the read!