

Support following the sudden death of a child or young person

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Aim:

To ensure anyone affected by the sudden and unexpected death of a child or young person aged 25 and under is supported immediately, and in the longer term.

Method:

2wish was founded in 2012 following the personal experience of our Founder and CEO, Rhian Mannings, who lost her one-year-old son, George, and 5 days after, her husband, consumed with grief, took his own life.

Working with professionals in the A&E and Critical Care departments of the University Hospital of Wales in Cardiff, an immediate support pathway was written and cleared through clinical governance and a twelve-month pilot trialed.

Following a sudden death, a memory box is offered, the family are referred (with consent) and first contact is made within 24-48 hours. Immediate support lasts whilst risk and/or need is present.

Further support includes counselling, complementary therapy, play therapy, focus groups, monthly events and a respite house. We support families, friends, witnesses, professionals and individuals and do not put a timeline on grief allowing those bereaved to engage with our service as and when they are ready.

Results:

Through partnership working and a consistent approach we embedded our service and work in partnership with every health board, hospital, police force, coroner's office and mental health team across Wales.

We are the leading charity for sudden death in children and young people in Wales and expanded into phase one of England (there are ten phases in total) in January 2024. Phase two of the expansion is planned for Spring 2025.

Conclusion:

We save lives by ensuring those affected by the sudden death of a child have access to immediate support.

We reduce pressure on public and primary care sectors by filling the gap that exists to support those suddenly bereaved of a child through immediate emotional, and practical, support.

We will continue to ensure every individual affected by sudden and unexpected death is offered support.

