

NSF - Where are we now?

The National Service Framework (NSF) for Long-Term Conditions was launched in 2005. With its 11 Quality Requirements, it sets out a vision of how services for people living with a long-term neurological condition(s) can be improved. The NSF should be fully implemented over 10 years, so 2010 represents the mid-point, and a very good time to take stock of any changes.

The Department of Health Long-Term Conditions Team is working closely with representatives of Health, Social Care and the Neurological Alliance on Mid-Term Review to assess progress to date and to identify areas needing development. Please cascade this information around your organisations and contacts to ensure that everyone is aware of the intended Review. The Mid-Point Review will seek the views of patients and carers, as well as health commissioners, so your contribution will be vital. You can find more and join the LTC Community and have your say by logging on to: <http://www.ltc-community.org.uk/>.

Care Quality Commission Special Review

The Care Quality Commission (CQC), as the national regulator, is empowered to drive improvement in health and social care services and to criticise poor service provision. The CQC has included neurology on its shortlist of 13 topics for special Review in 2010/11. This provides a great opportunity for us to comment on services and make sure that the voice of people with a neurological condition is heard. The Neurological Alliance and the WBNA have campaigned for this but now it needs everyone's support to make the review happen. Please respond to the consultation:

- Online form. Go to www.cqc.org.uk and follow links for "consultation on our assessments of quality 2010-11"
- By email assessmentconsult@cqc.org.uk
- By letter to: Assessment Consultation, Care Quality Commission, 103-105 Bunhill Row, FREEPOST Lon 15399, London. EC1B 1QW

The online form doesn't ask for details about who is completing the form and so responses may be more powerful *via* letter or email. If you are a service user or carer, please include your individual stories of where you have received good or poor, or even no, service and what this has meant to you in managing your condition. You should stress what you think they particularly need to pay attention to and what difference this would make to people with neurological conditions. Also in your response, it is important your comments cover both health and local authority services as the CQC regulates both of these.

Ease that pain!

Our President Dr Stephen Allen headed the line of speakers at a South Central SHA conference on pain, attracting over 100 professional delegates. It is evident that many individuals and departments across the region are providing excellent pain management services. However there is evidence of patients finding it difficult, slow or almost impossible to access this expertise. Clearly there is a need for care pathways for patients in pain to be improved and we look forward to that happening.

Prevention rules!

We welcome Berkshire West PCT's Strategic Plan 2009-2014 and particularly its new vision, 'Keeping people well and out of

hospital'. We could not agree more! The plan recognises the growing numbers of those with long term conditions and makes many proposals for better services for those affected by stroke, learning difficulties and dementia. There will be increased focus on treating some forms of pain, pressure sore avoidance, and falls prevention, all important initiatives. The new '*Talking Therapies*' service is also a major drive to support those with lower-level psychological support needs. New approaches to structuring service delivery teams will emerge. We suggest it will be important that some of these developing services will include particular expertise to help all neurology patients quickly and effectively. Disappointingly, the broader subject of neurology does not get a specific mention in the strategy.

2015 looms closer

Sadly, the Commissioning Manger for Neuro Services, Jill Dean, also Chair of the important Neuro Local Implementation Team (LIT), is leaving the PCT and we wish her well in retirement. The Neuro LIT has a very large agenda to crack, if the standards of the NSF for Long Term Neurological Conditions are to be met by 2015. The Alliance is an active member of the LIT and our Vision Statement can be found on our web site: www.wbna.org.uk

LINKing up!

We were delighted to be asked by the three Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) of Western Berkshire to work with them on a survey of the views of local neurology patients and those who look after them. We plan to survey about 1600 patients and their carers. This is a postal survey and you will be provided with a stamped, addressed envelope for your reply. Findings will be available in the summer and will be used to inform service providers and the LIT about matters that patients and carers need and value. If you would like to participate in

the survey please contact John Holt on 01635-33582 or JohnMHoltBSc@aol.com

HydroPool Update

We are delighted that the preliminary stages of applying for planning permission for constructing a hydrotherapy pool near Newbury/Thatcham have been concluded and the formal stage of seeking permission has started. WBNA congratulates all involved for pushing ahead and for supporting this important development.

Speaking with one voice

WBNA has joined with other local user-led voluntary groups of disabled people, service users and carers to establish some common priorities. These include:

- Providing support for those who fall below the eligibility criteria threshold
- Identifying hidden demand for services
- Need for an information/advice service
- Sustainable funding for the disability/ carer/service user-led voluntary sector
- Plugging infrastructure gaps
- A meaningful voice at decision making

Dates for your diary

We were forced to postpone our January meeting due to appalling weather, so we are delighted that our speaker on March 11th will be Angela Todd, who will talk about Reading's Service Priorities for Neurological Conditions. Other dates for 2010 Open Meetings are: May 13th, July 8th, September 9th (AGM) and November 11th. Meetings (except AGM) are held at St Joseph's Church Hall, Newbury, 1.45 for 2.00 pm. All are welcome to come along.

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