

*Neurology conference, 'Experts together'.*

Have you booked your place yet for our 'Experts Together' all day neurology conference to be held on Friday 28th March?

Speakers, include 4 professors headed by Baroness Susan Greenfield, Director of the Royal Institution, and bookings are being snapped up quickly. Professor Greenfield will talk on the plasticity of the brain, and delegates will hear updates on the management of MS, Parkinson's, Polio, Motor Neurone Disease, Stroke, and Epilepsy. Experts on neuro physiotherapy and speech & language therapy will explain all. Delegates will feel the frontiers of science of Functional Imaging, one of the most promising tools of the future in diagnosis. Several speakers have international acclaim and the event is education accredited.

Held in the highly convivial venue of Newbury racecourse, trade stands include the Florence Nightingale School of nursing, pharmaceutical companies and Waterstones who will be displaying the latest books in the field.

Profits are for our neurology nurse fund. We are very grateful to sponsors, Charles, Lucas & Marshall, Awards for All, The British Polio Fellowship, Berkshire Branch, and Publicity Project (Newbury) Limited, and to Dr Christine Collin for her help with organisation.

Aimed primarily at health and social care professionals, places are a snip at £75. You won't find a better neurology conference anywhere in the UK this year! For information or to make a booking contact Hilary Hinchliffe on 01635 42775.

*Specialist neurology nurses, most expert of all?*

Readers may wonder why we are keen to see more specialist neurology nurses. It's a priority members raise, without necessarily giving hard and fast reasons. The statistics from our health and social care survey are, however, revealing.

Not many neurology patients had seen a neurology nurse, but when asked 'how well do you think this person understands how to help your condition?' 100% of respondents who had seen one answered 'well' or 'very well'. By comparison, GPs, consultants and community nurses trailed behind on the same question. Maybe it's some magic combination of up to date, spot-on information, with time to listen and an ability to deliver that odd little extra that makes all the difference?

The post we aim to fund is half a general neurology nurse. We have £10k set aside to help establish the post, and conference profits will add to this. There is a delay in sorting out the other half of the post, but we are confident it will soon be in place, and are delighted to be able to make a positive contribution.

*'Experts' in training across Berkshire.*

'Expert Patient' programmes are springing up all over. The PCTs in Windsor, Reading and Newbury have asked us to publicise their respective programmes. The PCT contacts are:

Newbury, Jan Evans on 01635 32500,

Reading, Clare Stafford on 0118 982 2898,

Windsor, Ascot & Maidenhead, Barbara Gallagher on 01753 636 112.

## *Democracy shall prevail!*

When 7 regional alliances met recently an informal election seemed opportune, and Diane Newman of the Cambridgeshire Alliance was 'elected' to represent the 12 regional alliances, onto the executive of the national Alliance. A 'proper' election will be held later, once someone has worked out how to organise it! After all, it is a lengthy and costly journey for remote alliances such as Jersey and Caithness to travel to central England for the regional meetings!

Diane seeks that the national Alliance supports the development of regional alliances. She also wants to increase awareness of neurology issues in Whitehall and ensure a strong input from the voluntary sector into the National Service Framework for people with long term conditions which will focus on neurology.

## *The prevalence jungle.*

A revised set of estimates of the prevalence of neurology in the UK has been drawn up by experts for the national Alliance:

10 million have a condition that 'has a major impact on their lives',  
8 million 'manage their condition day to day',  
1 million 'are disabled to some extent',  
350,000 'need help with most daily activities',  
600,000 patients pa are 'newly diagnosed',  
10% of A & E cases are neurology cases,  
19% of hospital admissions are neuro cases,  
and 850,000 friends and family care for people with a neurology condition.

The greatest numbers within those above include people with headaches and migraine, pain of course being a major issue for many other neurology patients. Yet it is only recently that, for the first time, someone within Thames Valley NHS Strategic Health Authority (TVStHA) has been given responsibility for specialist pain management services.

## *November open meeting.*

Kendall Bird, Director of Specialist Services Commissioning, TVStHA, addressed our November meeting and described how specialist NHS services are commissioned. This is driven according to the numbers of patients within any given area that need such a service. Some services are commissioned by one or more Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), while others are commissioned across anything from one to five counties; or maybe a single national centre of excellence is the answer.

Specialist commissioning in Thames Valley, is allocated among individuals scattered across 3 counties. Neurosciences commissioning is based within Oxford City PCT, whereas spinal cord injury is by Cherwell Vale and neuro genetics by Windsor! Our work is cut out to make all those involved aware of our concerns and needs, and to get a co-ordinated response.

## *Diary dates to note:*

Thursday 6th February. **Open meeting.**  
Speaker Sue Pascoe, W Berks. Social Services.  
1: 45. p.m. for 2 p.m. at St Joseph's hall.

Friday 28th March **Neurology Conference,**  
Newbury Racecourse. Cost £75. Confirmed  
booking essential. Tel: 01635 42775.

Thursday 3rd April. **Open meeting.**  
1: 45. p.m. for 2 p.m. at St Joseph's hall.

Thursday 5th June. **Open meeting.**  
Speaker Catherine Mountford, Director for  
Neurosciences Commissioning, TVStHA.  
1: 45. p.m. for 2 p.m. at St Joseph's hall.

Published by:

*West Berkshire Neurological Alliance,*

2, Clayhill Crescent, Newbury,  
Berks. RG14 2NP

**Tel: 01635 33582 Fax: 01635 569177**

Registered Charity No. 1081021