

Improving Local Pain Services

The Alliance is pleased to announce a new initiative to improve local Pain Services.

The South Central Strategic Health Authority has awarded WBNA a grant of £10,000 for a pilot project to appoint a GP with Special Interest (GPwSI) in the Management of Pain for West Berkshire.

The need for improved local pain services became evident after our Internet Pain Survey in 2009. At our conference, 'Brains, Pains and Gains', we heard a valuable talk from Dr Mark Ritchie, a GP specialist in Pain Management. He highlighted the problems of coping with chronic pain and described some practical approaches to its management by a GP working directly with her/his patients in a Primary Care setting.

Now, the Alliance, with the support of RBH consultants Dr Deepak Ravindran (Pain Unit) and Dr Faraz Jeddi (NeuroRehab Dept), has been successful in a bid for funds from the SHA. The full amount required to fund this project is £27k. In addition to the £10k from the SHA, the WBNA committee has agreed to contribute £10k and to work to raise the remainder needed.

With involvement of the RBH Pain Unit, the appointed GPwSI will receive, over a two-year period, a unique combination of specialist training in pain management with a focus on neuropathic pain. Thereafter, the GP specialist should be able to provide three or four sessions per week as a GPwSI in Pain Management. We hope the post will become a focal point for a community neuropathic pain service and help to raise standards. The project should improve services for people affected by painful

neurological conditions and help reduce referrals to hospital.

Neuro Needs Assessment

At our May Open meeting, we heard from Helene Raynsford that Berkshire West's Public Health team is making good progress writing a Needs Assessment for neurology. The review includes: information on the prevalence of 15 different conditions, an audit of local neuro services, gaps in those services and requirements of national policy. The report will make practical recommendations for service improvements. The exact publication date is not clear, but is eagerly awaited, as there are so many important issues to address. When the report is available we will provide a link to it from our website www.wbna.org.uk.

Continuing Healthcare Funding

The Department of Health has announced that individuals who have retrospective claims for NHS Continuing Healthcare Funding for the period 2004 to 2012 must notify NHS Berkshire by specific deadlines. If you wish to request an assessment for eligibility, please contact the Continuing Healthcare Team on 01635 273580.

High Court challenge for WBC

Following the swingeing £1.8M cuts to local care and support services in 2012-13, London solicitors Irwin Mitchell have been instructed to mount a legal challenge in the High Court against West Berkshire, Wokingham and Northumberland councils. The claim is that these councils currently operate a policy which means only those with needs classed as 'critical' can access care

services. Potentially thousands of people are missing out on necessary care and support where:

- neglect or abuse has occurred
- they are unable to carry out the majority of their personal care
- they cannot sustain the majority of their support network and family and other social roles.

While Irwin Mitchell's previous cases in this area have been based on councils failing to consult properly or act in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 when the Council's sought to introduce this policy, this case is being argued on the basis that a 'critical-only' policy is in itself unlawful, being a breach of section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 (CSDPA), and so no Council can have such a policy or seek to introduce this policy in the future.

Alex Rook, the lawyer at Irwin Mitchell acting on behalf of the five clients, says: "This policy in West Berkshire leaves our clients and possibly thousands of others both potentially vulnerable to harm and isolated from their local communities. "It also leads to what is often described as the 'postcode lottery' in social care, whereby any of our clients could move to one of the 149 other councils that do not have the same policy and would then be eligible for much needed care. We are determined to ensure that our clients can get the support they need and are lawfully entitled to." For more information visit: www.irwinmitchell.com and search for: Legal-Battle-Launched-To-Help-Thousands-Denied-Social-Care-Due-To-Postcode-Lottery.

Survey on Living with Incontinence

The Berkshire West Local Involvement Network (LINK) has agreed to fund a survey on 'Living with Incontinence'. This builds on the findings of our recent Focus Group held

on 26th March. The report from this Focus Group makes 9 recommendations including:

- Lowering embarrassment barriers
- Improving information services
- Increasing preventative activity
- Improving condition-specific advice
- Improving GP training
- Improve co-ordinated service delivery
- Reviewing the Advisory Service

From the proposed patient survey we hope to generate several hundred responses, and provide powerful data to: add to the Focus Group report and argue more effectively for better continence services. To read this Report and our earlier Focus Group Reports please visit our website www.wbna.org.uk.

Dates for your diary

Our next Open Meeting will be held on Thursday July 12th 2012 at St Joseph's Church Hall in Newbury at 1.45 for 2.00 pm. We plan to have one of the governors of the RBH Foundation Trust as speaker. Our 2012 AGM will be on September 13th at 7.30 pm at The Holiday Inn, Padworth. The Guest Speaker will be Dr Deepak Ravindran, Pain Consultant at the Royal Berkshire Hospital.

Our final meeting for 2012 will be on November 8th with speaker Dr Elizabeth Johnson of South Reading Clinical Commissioning Group.

In light of the proposal to create a new local epilepsy nurse post we are supporting a consultation event on the evening of Monday 23rd July in Newbury. For details please contact Debbie on 01635 866560.

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