

Specialist Therapy & Exercise Rehab Gym

West Berkshire Therapy Centre's specialist exercise and rehab gym is set to open in the Spring of 2014. The gym will benefit those with neurological, cardiac, pulmonary, diabetic, sight loss and many other disabling conditions. The project Board has raised £80k and a final push is under way to raise the balance needed to set up and run the service. The gym will feature a range of power-assisted equipment that moves every major muscle in the body gently and repeatedly, strengthening and balancing weak muscles, improving blood circulation, helping weight management and fending off the risk of medical complications that can often arise for people whose disability makes it difficult to take exercise. For further information visit

www.westberkshiretherapycentre.org.uk/news or call John Holt on 01635

33582. If you can help this excellent project in any way, perhaps by holding a fund raising event or making a donation, we urge you to do so ASAP. Negotiations for a plot on which to site a hydrotherapy pool alongside continue.

Newbury Racecourse Exit Collection

We would like to thank Newbury Racecourse for allowing us to hold an exit collection at their race meeting on 20th September. We would also like to thank all the race goers that day who gave so generously, allowing us to raise a magnificent £1113.18 towards our funds. Many thanks also to all the volunteers who helped us on the day.

WBNA AGM

On 26th September we held our 14th AGM. After completing the formal business a presentation outlining WBNA's past, present and future work program, our list of priorities and an overview of ideas to improve local neurological service provision confirmed strong levels of consensus. The Meeting finished with a chance for those attending to network.

Berkshire West Federation of CCG's

We are delighted that the Berkshire West Federation of CCG's has taken a pro-active approach and set aside funds for new services such as the epilepsy nurse specialist and for those with ME/CFS. We are delighted also to have been involved in helping to assess some of the exciting bids that are on the table to improve some of the NHS services used by neurology patients locally. We look forward to being able to confirm some of the details in the next edition.

Thames Valley Neuro Network

WBNA recently attended two big meetings in Oxford, helping to shape the development of the Thames Valley Neuro Clinical Network. We know there is a lot more we can contribute to that in due course. We plan to make an active contribution to the Network, representing patient and carer needs at every opportunity. To get involved contact John on 01635 33582 or email johnmholtbsc@aol.com

Coping against the odds

We are most grateful to everyone who attended our October focus group on 'Coping when Health and Social Care systems falter'. Clearly, many people have experienced some incredibly tough situations as they have tried to get a diagnosis, tried to understand the impact, tried to access services that their doctor has never heard of or may not exist locally, or tried to work out why a service that offers everything in fact offers nothing because of the 'one size fits all' approach. The harsh reality of losing health, job and loved ones in rapid succession can be unbearable and early support makes a huge difference. When statutory and voluntary sector services are accessible and on the ball, that can stop people from hitting the depths of despair. The main message for patients and carers is 'talk to others in the same boat', to most front line staff and volunteers it's generally 'a big thank you', and the question (and sometimes the issue) to service designers is 'would you cope if you had to use your own service?'. We will publish a report as soon as we can. In the meantime check our website if you need ideas how to find the many local neuro support groups in the area.

Alzheimer's Research

To mark the recent World Alzheimer's Day the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) in partnership with Alzheimer's Research UK, has released a new short film, which hopes to encourage more patients and carers to take part in ground-breaking research into dementia and other neurodegenerative diseases. Dementia affects around 820,000 people in the UK – a figure that is expected to rise to one million people by 2021. The film,

which opens with the startling fact "that every three minutes someone develops dementia", highlights the desperate need for more research into diagnosis, care, preventions and treatments of the condition. Dr Simon Ridley, Head of Research at Alzheimer's Research UK said: "People with dementia and their carers are an important part of the research effort because they are experts on their own condition. By volunteering to help with research studies, people with and without dementia can help us gain a better insight into what causes dementia and how we can develop new approaches to prevention and treatment." To view 'Taking part in dementia research' go to www.youtube.com/NIHRtv or www.FocusOnDementia.nihr.ac.uk

DLA Online Toolkit

The Department for Work and Pensions has designed a 'toolkit' and training tool for those who provide information to support Disability Living Allowance (DLA) claimants. To view, go to: <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/specialist-guides/pip-toolkit/>

WBNA Dates for your diary

Open meeting dates for 2013:
Nov 14th Tim Goadby, (Brain Injury Rehab Trust) and **Matthew Poll**, (Talking Therapies Service).
1.45pm for 2 pm, St Joseph's, Newbury

WBNA Conference:
March 6th 2014, Wokefield Park

West Berkshire Neurological Alliance

2 Clayhill Crescent Newbury RG14 2NP
Tel: 01635 33582 Fax: 01635 569177
Email: secretary@wbna.org.uk
www.wbna.org.uk

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