

### *Stronger local partnerships*

Guest speaker at our July open meeting was Tandra Forster, Head of Adult Services at West Berks Council, who outlined 'A new way of delivering social care'. Old ways of offering a standard service are being replaced by a process that recognises and meets individual needs. The Care Act is sweeping in, with more partnerships with the NHS.

WBNA members urged that more effective working with the voluntary sector will be equally important.

### *Grants for carers' breaks*

We are delighted that Berkshire Community Foundation has entrusted us with further funds so we can distribute grants of up to £300 each, to help carers take breaks from caring.

Applicants must live in the local authority areas of West Berkshire, Reading or Wokingham and provide care for at least fifteen hours a week. Funds are limited and will be allocated on a rolling basis.

The application form is simple and decisions made quickly, based on need and merit, aiming to help relieve the pressures experienced by those in a caring role. There is no means test. Applications should be received before 31st August and successful grants spent within six months of the award. Further details are on the application form, available at [johnmholtbsc@aol.com](mailto:johnmholtbsc@aol.com)

### *Local five-year neuro vision and focus*

The NHS Berkshire West Neuro Steering Group has held its first two meetings. An immediate priority is to agree robust care pathways for neuro patients, which currently are unclear or not followed consistently. Better use of neuro data and some specific neuro-workforce project proposals were also discussed. The Alliance looks forward to many other issues being addressed in due course, to improve the diagnosis, treatment and support on offer to all those with neurological problems.

To help inform matters, WBNA will hold a focus group on 14<sup>th</sup> September on 'Experiences of being diagnosed recently with a neurological condition'. For more information contact John at [johnmholtbsc@aol.com](mailto:johnmholtbsc@aol.com)

### *Disappointing progress nationally*

A report from the National Audit Office (NAO) confirms that government has failed to achieve key objectives set in 2012 for improving services for those with neurological conditions. According to NAO, progress has been 'poor to moderate' and Government has failed:

- \* to use outcome indicators to improve access to neurology services,
- \* to rectify the shortage of neurology data, for example the numbers of neurology service users and effective measures of patient outcomes,
- \* to ensure that everyone with a long-term neuro condition has a care plan.

Nationally there is highly variable access to specialist expertise, long waiting times for diagnosis, and poor care planning and coordination

The National Neurological Alliance [www.neural.org.uk](http://www.neural.org.uk) is asking the Public Accounts Committee for a full review of neurology in light of the findings.

### *WBNA conference 2016*

Our 2016 neuro conference will be at the Arlington Arts Centre on Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> May, with Professor Derick Wade our keynote speaker. The theme will be 'The relationship between Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Neurological Care'. **Note your diary now!**

### *West Berkshire Therapy Centre*

A Saturday service has started at West Berkshire Therapy Centre, where many neurological and other clients benefit from taking power-assisted exercise. Clients are helped with mobility, general well-being and ability to perform tasks of daily living. To find out more about this amazing facility. tel: 01635 864561 [www.westberkshiretherapycentre.org.uk](http://www.westberkshiretherapycentre.org.uk)

### *News snippets*

**The Huntington's Disease Association** has restarted a branch in Berkshire West. Contact Debbie at [deborahnicol4@gmail.com](mailto:deborahnicol4@gmail.com)

**Epilepsy Action** now holds chat meetings on the third Monday of each month, 2-4 pm in Wokingham. Contact Jenny on 07919 200395 for details.

**Brain Tumour Support Group** is looking for more members. Contact Christine on [info@brain-tumour.co.uk](mailto:info@brain-tumour.co.uk)

**Fibromyalgia** hit Whitehall when Alok Sharma, MP for Reading West, raised a debate in Parliament on the condition, to inspire government interest. He called for improved rates of diagnosis, more integrated and holistic services, patient empowerment, and a network of fibromyalgia clinics across the country. Well done Reading FM Support Group for securing such support from their MP!

**The NHS wheelchair service** has moved a few yards, to more accessible space at Royal Berks Hospital.

### *WBNA Secretary needed!*

We are still looking for a Secretary, should anyone with the skills and time be available. To find out more contact John on [johnmholtbsc@aol.com](mailto:johnmholtbsc@aol.com)

### *Dates for your diary*

#### **AGM**

**Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> September**  
Holiday Inn Padworth  
*Guest speaker Dr Richard Perry GP  
lead for neuro for Berkshire West  
7 for 7.30. Everyone welcome!*

#### **Open meeting:**

**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> November**  
St Joseph's Church Hall, Newbury.  
1.45 for 2 pm. Everyone welcome!

#### **Conference 2016**

**Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2016**  
*Pre-booking essential, details to follow*

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