

Chairman's Annual Report for 2014

This is our fifteenth AGM. We have had another very good year. Since April 2012 the NHS has been lead by GPs, with a stronger focus on patients. We have a seat on the Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group Federation's Long Term Conditions Board. This group has initiated projects on epilepsy, ME/CFS and neuro workforce restructure, discussing neurological need regularly. Recently, three local GPs have offered to lead on neurological matters, such that the Neuro Implementation Team is set to reconvene. This should ensure that neurological needs will be reviewed more systematically. However, we remain confounded that the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for Neurology, due to be issued in December 2010 remains unpublished. We have a seat on the Thames Valley Neurological Clinical Network, where progress has been patchy, slow, Oxford-based and introspective. Epilepsy, migraine & headache and neurological trauma are priorities under consideration there.

We continue to enjoy a loyal and supportive membership. This is due to the relevance of the meetings we hold and our needs-orientated research that inform the representations we make on behalf of neurological patients and carers, which we do in as many scenarios as possible. Since last year we have held Focus Groups on 'Coping when Health and Social Care systems falter' and 'Continuity of Care', which generated strong interest among statutory sector commissioners. Our next focus group will be on September 29th on 'Living with Migraine or Headache', aiming to inform NHS projects at CCG and NHS Area levels. Further Focus Groups will follow.

With support from numerous benefactors, our 2014 Conference, entitled 'Neuro rehab, facts, fears, future', was organised by Professor Mike Wilson, with clinical oversight from Dr Faraz Jeddi, both of whom did a sterling job. I would like to thank everyone who helped to support, plan and organise the event. Nearly 100 delegates attended it, at Wokefield Park, and extracts of the presentations are on our web site.

We are delighted that West Berkshire Therapy Centre has opened, providing power-assisted exercise to neurological and other disabling conditions. We are delighted to be its largest backer, with two WBNA Trustees also on its Board. The Centre is generating remarkable results for its clients. We continue to work with West Berkshire Disability Alliance and Independent Living Network wherever opportunities arise, helping to maintain a dialogue with the three local Unitary Authorities, particularly with West Berkshire. We value our links with Healthwatch, the Patient Panel and many other organisations. Two of our Trustees are Healthwatch Champions which has helped us raise concerns to encourage that all NHS service leads should be required to submit development plans on an annual basis, to balance NHS service provision.

Our executive has been 8-strong this year. We functioned without a Secretary throughout the year, covering and funding all our activities seamlessly. Our reserves are strong and planning for our next conference will start in December. I would like to pay tribute to Fred Davison, who has decided to stand down, after serving for many years with distinction as Secretary, Conference Organiser and National Delegate. I am delighted to award him life membership of the organisation. I thank everyone on the committee for their hard and effective teamwork and dedication and thank our Patrons for their longstanding support.

Irene Waters (Chairman)

4th September 2014