

9 February 2009

National Information Prescriptions Programme

The importance of local information and support centres

1. Introduction

This latest resource provides more information about the different organisations working together locally to provide people with a wide range of health and social care services. It highlights how important it is for all these organisations to have access to high quality local sources of information and support so patients, carers and the wider public are able to make informed choices about their care and be signposted to local sources of further advice and support.

2. National guidance to support more personalised care through information, choice and care planning

Much of the [latest national guidance suggests](#) that a co-ordinated, integrated and multi agency approach is needed at local and regional levels to ensure people:

- 1 have improved quality of life, health and well being and are enabled to be more independent.
- 2 are supported and enabled to self care and have an active involvement in decisions about their care and support
- 3 have choice and control over their care and support so that services are built around their needs
- 4 can design their care around health and social care services which are integrated, flexible, proactive and responsive to individual needs
- 5 are offered health and social care services which are high quality, efficient and sustainable

Organisations providing NHS services have a statutory duty to offer high quality sources of information and support as an integral part of the care they provide to people.

3. Local organisations working to provide more personalised care through information, choice and care planning

Here is a diagram representing all the potential agencies involved with developing better communications links and more accessible sources of information and support. The following pages highlight the importance to these agencies of local information and support centres and provide further details about the support, advice and other services they offer to local people.



Patient information and support centres

In many local areas across England, patient information and support centres are being developed as recognised and well-respected hubs for local patient information delivery. Local authorities have comprehensive lists of the non-statutory organisations providing services and support in their areas and PCTs are now recognising the importance for their staff of being able to readily access these lists.

A number of local authorities and some PCTs are keen for these local information and support centres to work more closely together in order to provide a co-ordinated network offering a comprehensive range of well publicised services and support to patients, carers and health & social care professionals. Every health and social care professional will then be able to quickly access their services and routinely signpost patients and carers to the further support and advice they offer

Some hospitals have set up generic patient information centres that include a section on cancer. In the absence of generic patient information resource centres, other hospitals have set up cancer information and support centres and many of these have been funded by non-statutory organisations. Other hospitals are now developing plans to set up and run generic patient information centres located in high patient flow areas of the hospital.

Some local patient information resource centres have also been established in community settings – often in libraries. Many community groups already provide similar services and are keen to see these more accessible to a much wider range of people and organisations. Groups of GP practices are now looking at setting up a greater range of community based patient information resource centres and linking these to libraries, CABs and other existing community advice and support centres.

Learning from the piloting programme and recent work undertaken by the Cancer Services Collaborative 'Improvement Partnership' has highlighted the key roles and responsibilities of existing patient information and resource centres:

- 1 Ensure information leaflets produced by trusts and local authorities that host their services are regularly reviewed and updated with the most up to date version being kept online
- 2 Ensure only the most up to date versions of leaflets produced by national and other local information providers are held in stock
- 3 In collaboration with trusts and local authorities that host their services, identify and source the resources needed to maintain and improve the information resource centre
- 4 Provide expert knowledge and expertise in regularly researching and identifying the latest national and local publications available and searching for additional sources of information should they be requested
- 5 Produce and publish local leaflets where gaps have been identified and cannot be filled by using national information and ensure the most up to date versions are kept online
- 6 Provide a range of specialist information advice and support services to patients, carers and health professionals. This may involve setting up or supporting a patient information help-line
- 7 Ensure health & social care professionals are provided with up to date information packs to offer to their patients and carers
- 8 Provide a session at induction programmes for all new health & social care staff. Provide sessions on patient information delivery at social worker, nurse and doctor training programmes and professional seminars and training sessions for community and primary care staff
- 9 In some cases, recruit, train and manage a team of volunteers
- 10 Be actively engaged and involved in on going local patient information developments so services are co-ordinated with other centres, developed to reflect the needs of local communities and local gaps in current service provision are filled

4. Learning from the Cancer Services Collaborative 'Improvement Partnership'

This document has been produced using learning from the [Cancer Services Collaborative 'Improvement Partnership'](#) (CSCIP) now part of [NHS Improvement](#).

In 2006 the CSCIP produced guidance to cancer networks detailing [the local infrastructure needed to support improved patient information delivery](#).

5. Learning from the Information Prescription piloting programme

The piloting phase of the information prescriptions programme was completed in January 2008. The evaluation consortium published an [interim report in November 2007](#). Since then a [summary of the final report](#) was published in March 2008 with the [full final report including 10 appendices](#) that contain details of the supporting evidence gathered being published in August 2008.

The final conference was held on 19 March - showcasing pilot findings to nearly 300 delegates drawn from a cross section of health and social care organisations. [The conference report](#) is also available through the information prescriptions website.

The information and momentum built through the piloting phase has been used to inform and shape the support and advice being developed nationally to help organisations consider how best to implement information prescriptions locally to meet the needs of their local communities.

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