

Fresh actions set out to treat neurological conditions in Wales

The plan, first published in May 2014 focuses on raising awareness of neurological conditions, ensuring quick diagnosis of patients, providing fast and effective care, and helping people live with their condition. The plan also aims to improve the information available on neurological conditions and treatment; as well as help target research into causes, treatments and cures.

There are more than 100,000 people in Wales affected with a long term neurological condition. Conditions range from cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, Parkinson's disease and multiple sclerosis to epilepsy.

Progress has been made against the priorities originally set in 2013 – 2017 detailed in the Annual Statement of Progress – Neurological Conditions published in March 2017. This includes a reduction in the average time an individual spends in hospital; falling from 6.4 days in 2010-11 to 4.2 days in 2015-16.

The length of stay following an elective admission has also reduced from 3.9 days to 2.2 days; a similar reduction has been seen for emergency admissions, from 9.2 days to 7 days.

Key actions of the updated plan build on the foundations of the previous plan and continue to drive forward the vision for improving neurological services across Wales more effectively and at a greater pace, in conjunction with Health Boards' local vision for their resident population.

Actions include:

- Raising awareness of neurological conditions by involving patients and carers in designing services
- Ensuring timely diagnosis of neurological conditions by calling on Health Boards to provide specialist advice within 24 hours (on 7 day week basis) for those admitted acutely to hospital with a suspected neurological problem
- Making sure those living with a neurological condition have access to care and support as close to home as possible by a flexible workforce with the appropriate level of evidence based knowledge, skill and expertise.

Health Secretary Vaughan Gething said:

“We want to continue to ensure people affected by a neurological condition have timely access to high-quality care, integrated with social services where appropriate, irrespective of where they live and how these services are delivered.

“I’m pleased we have been able to build on previous progress in delivering this plan and develop a new and improved vision to safeguard the future of our services.

“We have already committed to investing £1.2m to improve access to neuro-rehabilitation services in Wales. The neurological conditions implementation group prioritises raising awareness of conditions, including the development of patient reported outcome measures (PROMs) and patient reported experience measures (PREMs) to consistently improve the service.

“We want health boards to use this funding to make tangible differences in the health, wellbeing and independence of people living with long-term neurological conditions.”