Learning Disability modernisation gathers pace

Modernising our Learning Disabilities services is a top priority this year and work is about to start on actions produced by the newly formed Learning Disabilities Modernisation Steering Group.

The Group was set up following last year’s public consultation on Learning Disabilities day services and a stakeholder event in March.

Consisting of representation from service users, carers, health and social care staff, and advocacy groups, the Group has already pulled together an action plan to take the modernisation forward.

Key themes of the plan include:
- people with autism
- people with complex needs and challenging behaviour
- older carers

There are four areas the Group is specifically looking at developing. These are: employment and further education opportunities for service users; community opportunities; assessment and care management (including how we support service users to move from day services into employment, further education etc if appropriate); and health (how we can better support service users in terms of health, including those with complex health needs).

Rhoda Macleod, Head of Learning Disabilities with South West CHCP, said: “Last year’s consultation raised a number of issues which, coupled with strategic direction from the Learning Disabilities Partnership, helped inform a report on modernising our day services.

“One of the first things to come out of that was the need to establish a Service User Forum and a Carers’ Forum and I’m pleased to say that both of them are now up-and-running.

“We held another stakeholder event in March involving service users, carers and staff to look at what other things we needed to do to take the modernisation forward. From there the Steering Group was formed and the four work-streams created.

“Our next step is to start developing these four areas of work, ensuring our services users and their families receive the support they need as services change.”

Gold and Silver for Gary

Congratulations to Wedge service user, Gary Nelson who picked up a gold and silver medal for indoor bowls in the recent Special Olympics.

A member of the Scotland West team, Gary (39) was one of 2,700 learning disabled athletes who took part in this year’s games in Leicester at the end of July.

The Games – now in their eighth year - ran for seven days and apart from welcoming athletes from 19 UK regions, they also saw 1500 volunteers, 1000 coaches and 6,000 families and friends attend.

So how does Gary feel being a medal winner? “Fantastic!” he said.
Would you or someone you know like to get involved in the design process of the new South Glasgow Hospital? Then our Community Engagement Advisory Group (CEAG) would like to hear from you.

The Group, which represents the views of patients and families, has already been talking to patients and their families on the design of the new hospital, but are keen to hear from more people.

Mark McAllister, Community Engagement Manager and a member of CEAG, said: “The aim of the group is to support patients and carers to get involved in the design process for the new hospital. All the findings from these discussions will then be fed directly back to the hospital project team.”

If you’re interested in taking part, contact: Mark McAllister on 0141 201 4789 or email: community.engagement@ggc.scot.nhs.uk

For young people and families wishing to take part in discussions about the new children’s hospital, contact: Kate Munro on 0141 201 4809 or the email address above.

The Community Engagement Advisory Group is producing its own newsletter, Engagement News. To get a copy or to be placed on the distribution list, contact: Lorna Gray on 0141 201 4809.

Get involved in the new South Glasgow Hospital
An innovative new gardening project is helping people with alcohol or drug addiction cope with giving up whilst at the same time teaching them healthy living.

The Grow It Cook It Eat It project is the brainchild of Senior Occupational Therapist Iain Laidlaw and co-facilitated by his colleague Miriam Howie, both of Glasgow Addiction Partnership, and its name gives it away: people taking part grow their own food, they are then taught how to cook it and they get to eat it at the end.

Iain explained: “I got the idea last year from other gardening projects that are carried out within our mental health services. I developed the idea to include information about healthier lifestyles and the Grow It Cook It Eat It project was born.

“The project is not just another gardening initiative; we’ve designed it to support people who are trying to maintain abstinence from alcohol or drugs and who may experience social anxiety or isolation.

“Tis aim is to help them to build confidence, learn coping skills and gain social contact within a supported environment. It’s very much an activity-based project and we all get our hands dirty!”

Iain got the project off the ground by applying for and getting an NHS Endowment Fund grant for £1200 which enabled him and his colleagues to create a small allotment garden in an open space within the centre of SWCHCP’s Langton Road offices. There they built raised beds and a greenhouse, and are now growing a range of vegetables and herbs including potatoes, cabbages, radish, lettuce, carrots, swede, tomatoes, peppers, basil and mint.

“We teach participants to grow their own food from seeds, they tend their crops and when the time’s right, they harvest them. The next phase (in autumn) of the project is the cooking one where they’ll be taught about creating healthy dishes from the crops they’ve grown. Everyone’s really looking forward to that,” he added.

The first group to go through the project are five people with alcohol dependancy. They come to Langton Road once a week to tend their garden.

“Tam said: “It gets me out the house. I usually don’t get out at all. I find it helps to meet other people who are going through the same as me and to chat about it. I’ve got a wee garden at home and I enjoy that. I’m looking forward to learning new skills in the kitchen.”

Davie said: “I get a great buzz from coming here. I get some exercise and it’s good to speak to other people in the same position as myself. The staff are great. I just wish we had more time in the garden. It’s encouraged me to grow strawberries and tomatoes at home.”

John said: “It is nice to be able to talk to other people, but I also really enjoy growing things. My background’s in gardening, but I’ve not been able to access a garden because I’m living in temporary accommodation. When the time is right I’d love a place with land attached and an allotment.”

Jan said: “The project gets me out the house and meeting new people. It’s very therapeutic and is helping me with my recovery. They’re a good team here and I’m really enjoying learning new skills. I did have some experience in the garden before, but it was only growing flowers. Seeing how much things have grown week to week really makes me feel good and lifts the spirits. I’m looking forward to the cooking part too.”
Epilepsy...

It is a condition that affects around 40,000 people in Scotland, yet how often do you hear people talk about it? Epilepsy is the most common serious neurological condition in the UK. It affects all ages, but is more common with children and people in later life.

So what causes it? Sometimes epilepsy is caused by a serious head injury or brain infection, such as meningitis. Sometimes, there can be a genetic link. For many cases, there simply is no identified cause.

Dr Ken O’Neill, Clinical Director of South West CHCP, explained: “Epilepsy is the tendency to have repeated seizures, which can affect one part or even the whole of the brain. There are 40 different types of seizures and unfortunately there is no known cure yet for epilepsy.”

He warned that people experiencing a seizure should not jump to the conclusion that they have epilepsy. “Seizures can also happen as a result of a high temperature or...”

Things to do

Keep calm. Once a seizure starts it will generally stop on its own. Check the time to see how long the seizure lasts. Move any objects that could cause injury. Remove glasses and loosen tight clothing around the neck. Put something soft like a rolled up jacket or cushion under the person’s head. Stop others from crowding around. Protect the person’s dignity and privacy, particularly if they have emptied their bladder or bowels. Turn the person onto their side into the recovery position as soon as the jerking stops. Speak softly and gently to the person and tell them what has happened. Remember, the person may be confused for a while after the seizure. They could have a headache and may want to sleep. Stay with the person until they have fully recovered.

Things not to do

Do not move the person unless they are in danger. Do not try to stop the jerking or restrain the person in any way. Do not put anything into the person’s mouth or between their teeth. Do not offer anything to eat or drink until the person fully recovers. Do not fuss around the person while they are recovering.
stigma, myths, facts

immediately after an accident.”
  He continued: “Being diagnosed with epilepsy can come as a shock. It can be difficult coming to terms with losing your driving licence or feeling that you’ve lost your independence. Others fear for their jobs, and are worried how this may affect relationships or family life. Children often worry about being ‘different’.
  “But people with epilepsy can and do lead normal lives. Anti-epileptic medication can very effectively control seizures. In fact, up to 70% of people on anti-epileptic medication can become seizure free.”

Myths and stigma still surround epilepsy. Many people do not know much about epilepsy and what they think they know is often not true. In fact:
  * Epilepsy is not contagious
  * You can’t swallow your tongue
  * Not everybody becomes unconscious
  * Not everyone with epilepsy is photosensitive

If you have been diagnosed with epilepsy, apart from health staff you can get a lot of useful advice and help from Epilepsy Scotland. Their staff are just a phone-call away to provide practical advice or simply offer a listening ear when you need to talk.
  confidential freephone helpline: 0808 800 2200
  helpline text: 07786 209 501
  email: enquiries@epilepsyscotland.org.uk
  web: www.epilepsyscotland.org.uk

epilepsy scotland
Scotland’s voice for epilepsy

Only call an ambulance if...

• this is a first seizure
• you don’t know the person’s medical history
• the seizure lasts longer than five minutes
• the person has injured themselves
South West toddler groups were smile-tastic recently when they put brush to paper to create some fantastic works of art as part of our recent Smile Month poster competition.

Local nurseries involved in our Smile Too Programme took part in the event and the winners were:
- Pollok area - Pollokshaws Day Nursery who got the first prize; Burnbrae Children’s Centre, who took second; and third prize went to Craigbank Nursery School.
- Govan area – Cardonald College nursery was first; Hyde ‘n’ Seek Nursery was second; and third prize went to Broomloan Nursery School.

All entries were displayed in the Pearce Institute for the Govan winners and Pollok Civic Realm for the Pollok posters.

Community Nursery Nurse, Susan Hammell, who along with colleague Kirsty Forbes, helped organise the event locally, said: “Thanks to everyone who took part. We were delighted with the response and had a lot of great entries. Congratulations to all the winners.”

First prize winners received a dental backdrop scene with an inflatable dental chair and dressing up clothes. Second prize winners were given an alligator dental puppet and book. The third prize was a Greedy Gorilla game and book.

Left: some of the winning entries.

Toddlers are tops for Smile posters

Are you the mother of a young baby? Do you feel bored at home? Would you like to get out and about, get some exercise and meet other mums? Then Walk ‘n’ Talk may be for you.

Organised by South West CHCP’s PACT (Parents and Children Together) team, Walk ‘n’ Talk is a weekly walk around Bellahouston Park designed for mums with prams. It takes place every Monday from 1-2pm (meet at the main gates near the leisure centre) and is completely free.

Jean McGuire, Family Support Worker with PACT, who is taking the group, explained: “Having a baby can make exercising difficult for new mums. They have to organise babysitting and get the baby ready before they can even think about getting out the door. Added to that is the fact that there are very few exercise activities mums with new babies can do together.”

That’s where Walk n Talk comes in as Jean’s colleague, Health Visitor Anne McGowan explained: “The aim of these walks is for mums to have a fun time whilst exercising and it’s a great way for them to improve their fitness levels. We’d encourage all new mums to meet us at the park and come and walk ‘n’ talk.”

For information, contact Jean or Anne on: 0141 276 8860.
Getting you back on track

Are you feeling a bit down? Does anxiety threaten to take over? Are you having problems sleeping at night? Then read on.

Pathways is an NHS service, begun in 2005, that offers help and advice to people who are suffering from common mental health problems such as anxiety, low mood/depression, sleep problems, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Post-Natal Depression.

Anyone living within the South West area can use the service, just ask your GP about it or contact the Pathways team directly (0141 577 7729). They can offer classes, groups or one-to-one sessions so give them a call to find out more.

You can also pick up a Pathways booklet at local health centres, libraries, leisure centres and other outlets, and there’s a brand new website that’s packed full of great advice: www.nhsggc.org.uk/pathways (available from the beginning of September).

South West CHCP Consultant Clinical Psychologist Dr Fiona Murray leads the team. She said: “Pathways offers people with common mental health problems a way of accessing support that will help them get back on their feet as quickly as possible.

“People need different levels of support from one-to-one help or some people only need a little bit of information to get them back on the right track. Anyone who thinks they need support can discuss the service with their GP or they can contact us directly and we’ll be happy to chat about the range of help available.”

“We offer clinics and classes throughout the South West including local health centres, Cardonald College and other local community venues. Our aim is to make it as easily accessible as possible to the people who need it,” Fiona said.

Contact Pathways - tel: 0141 577 7729 or www.nhsggc.org.uk/pathways

Online health tool

Health at Work have launched a brand new online 'lifestyle check' tool www.checkmylifestyle.com to help you make informed choices about your lifestyle.

After answering questions on health topics, Check My Lifestyle will generate a personal report packed full of good advice on how you can improve your health and wellbeing.

Health at Work also offer a range of services to workplaces in the Greater Glasgow and Clyde area. Contact: 0141 314 0024, email: liz.donaghy@ggc.scot.nhs.uk or web: www.healthatwork.org.uk

Relaxation Class

Pathways and the South West Stress Centre are starting relaxation classes in community venues across the South West.

These classes are free and will help you to learn techniques to cope with the ‘ups and downs’ of life.

The first classes will take place in Priesthill, followed by Kennishead, Pollokshaws, Shieldhall, Central Govan, Arden and Penilee.

Keep an eye out for information posters detailing times and dates of classes. These will be going up in your local GP surgery, local library and other venues soon.
Green Practice win quality award

Govan Health Centre’s Green Practice has been recognised for their high standards of patient care.
They’ve been awarded a prestigious Royal College of General Practitioners’ Quality Practice Award in recognition of the quality of patient care given by every member of the practice team.
Mary Cuthbertson, Practice Manager with the Green Practice said: “Only ten per cent of Scottish GP practices have this award and we’re delighted to be one of them. It’s testament to the hard work and dedication of the GPs and practice staff to providing the very best in patient care.”
To win the award, practice staff had to clearly demonstrate they adhere to set standards over a period of two years. They also underwent a day-long assessment visit by four trained Quality Practice Award assessors.

Staff of the Green Practice.

Financial advice for cancer patients

Have you or someone close to you been diagnosed with cancer? Your finances may not be the first thing on your mind, but being ill can be expensive.
If you or your loved one is struggling to cope with the financial impact of cancer, MacMillan can help.
The charity’s Benefits Service (Glasgow) offers a free, confidential, impartial and non-judgemental advice service for people and their families living with or affected by cancer.
The service can also offer a home visiting service with partners in the Pension Service and can signpost you to Council services such as occupational therapy and home care.
For more information, contact: MacMillan Benefits Service (Glasgow), Glasgow City Council, 280 George Street (1st Floor), Glasgow G1 1PR (tel: 0141 420 8123, email: macmillanbenefitsservice@glasgow.gov.uk). The service is open Monday to Thursday, 8.45am to 4.45pm and Friday 8.45am to 3.55pm.

Social scheme for older people

Are you an older person who lives on their own and doesn’t get out much? Then get in touch with Contact the Elderly.
A national charity, Contact the Elderly aims to soften the loneliness and isolation experienced by many older people who live alone and find it difficult to get out.
If you join, you can come along to their monthly meetings at a volunteer host’s house. A driver will come and pick you up, take you to the venue and then take you home again.
Members usually live alone, are generally in their 80s and 90s and unable to go out without a little assistance. Meetings always take place on a Sunday.
Information: Caroline Learmonth, West Scotland Development Officer, Contact the Elderly, 72 Mains Hill, Erskine (tel: 0141 812 5744 or email: caroline.learmonth@contactthe-elderly.org.uk).
Or visit their website: www.contact-the-elderly.org.uk

Useful Contacts

South West CHCP Headquarters - 0141 276 5239
South West Public Partnership Forum - 0141 276 4630
Community Development and Engagement Team - 0141 276 4630
Social Work Area Offices:
  - Govan - 0141 276 8700
  - Pollok - 0141 276 2900
NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde Head Office - 0141 201 4444
South West Community Planning Partnership - 0141 892 6330
South West Community Mental Health Project - 0141 445 1022
Glasgow Asylum Support Project - 0141 276 8850
Glasgow South West Carers Centre - 0141 440 5316
Citizens Advice Direct - 0870 290 3000