



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

To all Directors of Social Services
Departments in Wales

Eich cyf . Your ref :
Ein cyf . Our ref :

Date : 20th July 2006

Dear Colleague

ARRANGEMENTS FOR IMPLEMENTING HEALTHCHECKS FOR ADULTS AND OLDER PEOPLE WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY

Background

1. Adults with a learning disability often have a range of additional needs that stand in the way of fully utilising services. The overriding concern is to ensure that this new arrangement is fully taken up, so that appropriate treatment opportunities are not overlooked and a proactive approach is taken to maintaining good health. General Practitioners are likely to want to make specific arrangements to plan clinics and deliver the health checks to ensure that patients are dealt with sensitively. GP representatives have made the point that, for the scheme to work effectively, it will require practices to have early notice of eligible patients on their list. The proposed arrangements are designed to enable this while remaining within the Local Authority's responsibility to safeguard confidentiality. It is likely that the agreement which is already in place for the exchange of information between the Authority and its partner Health Board will facilitate this process.

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Notification Mechanism

2. The attached model letter will be the key to kick starting the process and should be issued with the attached easy read leaflet. We propose that Social Services Departments send these to all adults on their Learning Disability Registers who are using the Welsh health service. The letter also will be a prime document in the payment process for GPs, ensuring that payment is made only for health checks provided to eligible persons.

Eligibility & Delivery

3. A significant proportion of people will depend on assistance from carers. Carers will also be concerned to be involved to provide reassurance, support and assistance where necessary. For some the surgery may not be the most appropriate place to carry out the checks.

4. In most areas over a third of people will be living in supported accommodation of some kind, some of which may not be within the Authority's area. This service does not operate in England. People living outside Wales will therefore not be eligible and should not receive a letter.

5. There will be some people in residential care whose Ordinary Residence is outside the local area and who will not be on the Authority's Register. Such people are entitled to use local health services and will be able to take up the scheme. In these cases the initiative must be taken by the managers of these homes or the person's GP to bring the people into the scheme. To enable this to happen the GP/patient will require formal confirmation from the local authority contact (by issuing a model notification letter) that the person is on the Learning Disability Register of another authority.

6. There will be a very small number of patients who are on the Learning Disabilities Register of a Welsh local authority, but registered with a GP in England. These people are also eligible. LHBs will have to consider the most appropriate and convenient method of commissioning this service, taking account of specific local circumstances.

7. Care Managers can play a very helpful role in encouraging full uptake. They know the personal needs of the person and may be best placed to facilitate making suitable arrangements for the checks to be carried out.

ACTION BY SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENTS

8. For the scheme to operate effectively assistance from social services departments is required in 3 areas:

i) Notification of People with a Learning Disability

Social Services Departments are asked to draw on their Register of people with a Learning Disability and their client record systems to identify those people aged 18 years and above resident in Wales to:

- a) send to each person on the Register the model letter (and leaflet) which has been personalised to them, informing them of the new arrangements;
- b) send a copy of the letter to the person's General Practitioner;
- c) Where the GP is not known, send the GP copy marked 'GP not known' to the Care Manager or, if the person is resident in a facility within Wales but outside the local area, to the manager of the facility.

ii) Identification of Contacts for Registration Queries

GPs have asked for a contact name in each Local Authority who can deal with Register enquiries. It is proposed that this will be published on the Assembly Government's GMS website.

- **I should be grateful if you would let me have the details of the contact for your Authority by Friday, 4 August 2006.**

iii) Notification within services

- It would be helpful if those staff with care management responsibility for people with a learning disability are informed of the new arrangements at the outset of implementation and requested to assist in encouraging take up and in making arrangements for checks where appropriate.
- Systems should be adjusted to include asking about whether a health check has been carried out in the process of case reviews.
- Implementation arrangements will also bring to notice those cases where case records are incomplete and Departments are asked to try to ascertain the name of the person's GP where this is not recorded.
- In the initial arrangements Departments are asked to notify the agencies with whom they contract for residential care that these new arrangements are being implemented and ask them to encourage managers of care to assist in enabling the checks to be carried out.

- Where they find that some residents have not received letters of notification they should be asked to contact the local authority contact point to arrange for a letter to be issued/re-issued to the patient and GP to enable the person to be incorporated on the scheme. The easy read leaflet that has been prepared outlining the details of the scheme should assist in this.

Yours sincerely

John Carter
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