

Southwest Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Workforce Review

AIM

This collaborative working project aimed to undertake a rapid workforce review with the goal of identifying and understanding service challenges and delivering service improvements.

The Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Southwest Network appointed a researcher to work alongside a consultant from Health Education England and a broader team of representatives from the network's clinical teams, to undertake the rapid workforce review. As part of this project Health Education England (HEE) co-ordinated a rapid audit of roles and organisations that support people living with MS. This included NHS services and non-NHS organisations including local MS centres and MS Society groups.

TIMEFRAME

Due to Covid-19 limiting physical access to the participating sites and operational delays in the Southwest, this collaborative working project was completed later than anticipated (November 2024) and it was not possible to fulfil all the objectives of the contract.

OUTCOMES

The workforce audit identified several priority themes that should be advanced to support the development of MS care pathways across the Southwest Region. Not all the learnings were actioned, but the learnings can broadly be applied to help other trusts and applied in other therapy areas.

- Increase awareness of the way in which MS care is delivered to help adjust the workforce models, and associated resourcing
- Development of a Regional Multidisciplinary team (MDT) to help support and develop all centres in the region in their expertise in diagnosis and treatment decision making (achieved).
- Increase availability of neuroradiology to all MS Centres in the region (this partially achieved through the regional MDT)
- Administrative support to provide care pathway navigation and signposting improving integration with non-NHS services, for example MS centres and MS Society groups
- Development of a regional nurse educator to provide dedicated and experienced support and training for new nurses joining NHS services in the region
- Training for MS administrative staff to help develop skills that address the complexity of MS Care
- Open NHS supported training opportunities to non-NHS partner organisations that are delivering important support to MS services

CONCLUSION

The MS teams in the southwest region are keen to harness the ideas generated to improve services and care in the future. The teams have fully assessed the findings and have begun to implement the recommendations reached. Some of the momentum from the work has been used to support local decision making with greater recognition of the importance of the transition of care between a new and retiring nurse. The optimisation of clinical time, increased connectivity with wider clinical services and increased access to neuroradiology support are areas of focus that are currently being implemented.