

**National Spinal Injuries Centre
Service Users Committee Meeting**

Thursday 13th April 2006

Attending: Moray Cook
Danny Turnball
Mike Mackenzie
Paul Smith
Jackie Bailey
Maria Freeman

Tom Meagher (guest)

Apologies: Emily Leyden

There was no formal agenda for the meeting but a discussion took place on the following issues:

- 1. Replacement of Consultants** – The committee were pleased to hear from TM that Mr. Dennis Newton had recently been appointed as a locum Consultant to the NSIC, and that he has experience of spinal surgery and running a Spinal Injury Centre in South Africa. Unfortunately he cannot be offered a substantive post because of his age but it is hoped that he will be able to stay for at least 12 months. The committee asked what provisions were being made to find a permanent replacement and TM explained that the NSIC were awaiting the Trust Executives decision on how the shortfall in Consultants should be addressed. The NSIC are keen to find SCI specialist Consultants attached purely to the centre, but there is a feeling amongst the Trust that surgeon's within the Orthopaedic & Plastics teams can cover the surgical needs as they arise. The NSIC have already bought in the services of 2 Orthopaedic surgeons to cover the work that Prof. Kluger was doing and they will continue to support his replacement. Unfortunately the Trust's Plastics team has suffered considerable cut backs, which has hindered the same sort of arrangement. At present Mr. Derry is covering some of the Plastic's work within the NSIC but the arrangements for the future are far from settled. Long delays for operations are not being helped by restricted theatre lists for NSIC patients, which means that 'timely surgery' is not being delivered. The committee agreed that a letter should be sent to Mr. Malcolm Newton, Director of Services, requesting a meeting to discuss the implications of these shortfalls, as well as the on-going issue of cut backs in Therapy provision, in the hope that it may enlighten the Trust. **JB & DT to re-draft letter to Mr. Newton**

- 2. NHS Job Cuts** – The committee were very concerned to hear of so many Trusts within the NHS making huge job-cuts and questioned if the Bucks Hosp. Trust would be affected too. TM informed the committee that whilst the Trust had a £10 million deficit the Trust had decided to implement a 5% cut across all departments rather than make any redundancies. Consequently the NSIC will have a £365,000 cut imposed on its budget, however, due to the way the centre is funded this shouldn't be as dramatic a cut as on some departments. Unfortunately Therapy will be affected, as it doesn't come under the control of the NSIC, though the management were trying to alleviate this as much as possible by buying in more Therapy provision.
- 3. SCI News** – JB reported that the first two issues of SCI News had been sent to all patients on the NSIC's database, however, it had highlighted the fact that the database was not up-to-date and would probably need to be allocated to a member of staff to ensure that this was dealt with. Several of the committee members had not yet received their copies and agreed to let JB know if they had not received them within the next week or so.
- 4. Elective process for Service Users Committee** – JB reported that she had already received 3 nominations* for the committee and it was agreed that it was likely that more would be received before the closing date of 26th May 06. Should this be the case then a profile of each candidate will be included in the July issue of SCI News along with a voting slip. It is the aim of the committee to make the process as democratic as possible and that the inaugural committee members will be invited to stand for election, with 10 places on offer. (*One nomination had been received from a member of staff, who is also a patient under the care of the centre - whilst the committee felt this was an appropriate nominee it was agreed that the Management Team would be asked if there was any reason why this nomination would not be valid. The Management Team have consequently agreed that it is perfectly legitimate for a member of staff to stand for election, if they are also under the care of the centre.)
- 5. NSIC 5yr Strategy Review** – JB informed the committee that there was to be a meeting the following Wednesday afternoon where all Heads of Departments had been asked to do a 10-15 minute presentation on their Aims & Goals for the next 5yrs, and that she had been asked to do a presentation on behalf of the patients. JB agreed to draft a presentation and circulate to the committee members for comments and amendments as soon as possible.
- 6. Smoke Free NHS** – JB informed the committee that the Bucks Hosp Trust had formed a group looking at the implementation of a Smoke Free NHS as directed by the Dept. of Health. Debbie Green was representing the views and concerns of NSIC patients and was keen to have as much input from patients as possible. The general view of the committee was that whilst smoking was detrimental to good health there would be some very vulnerable patients, and relatives, going through a time of crisis who would need to be supported and have provision made for

them to continue smoking should they wish to. However, it was agreed that they should be encouraged to give up if at all possible, and take the opportunity to do so with support from the hospital. It was agreed this matter should be raised at the next few Patient Forum meetings.

- 7. NSIC Blue Badge Car Park** – MM raised the issue of protecting the car park immediately outside the entrance to the NSIC for its patients only. There are concerns that once the hospital's new Main Entrance is opened patients attending other departments will see it as the nearest Disabled car parking available and it will become even more difficult for NSIC patients to find somewhere to park. MM reported that as he had been heavily involved with getting the said car park designated for NSIC patient use a couple of years ago he had already emailed John Summers about this issue
- 8. Seating Assessments/Wheelchair Services** – MM raised the problem of getting timely wheelchair/seating assessments done both in-house and with local Wheelchair Service providers and wondered whether the issue should be dealt with locally or nationally. PS informed the committee that the matter is likely to be addressed nationally as there is now a working group looking at reviewing the whole of wheelchair provision and who provides what. However, MM felt it was still important for patients within the NSIC, particularly those who have a history of pressure sores, to be given immediate access to the seating clinic once they were allowed up in order to prevent any problems reoccurring.
- 9. The next service users committee meeting will take place on 15th June 2006 at 1pm.**