

The National Service Framework for Long-term Conditions

Information Leaflet



This leaflet is a summary of the key messages in the National Service Framework (NSF) for Long-term Conditions. The NSF was developed in consultation with people with long-term neurological conditions in order to raise standards of treatment, care and support across health and social care services. It does this through Quality Requirements for health and social care professionals to use.

The NSF is mainly for people with long-term neurological conditions. However, many aspects of the Quality Requirements in the NSF apply to people with other long-term conditions as well. The Health and Social Services in your local area will be expected to deliver each of the Quality Requirements over the next ten years, although how quickly they do this will depend upon local priorities.

What do we mean by a “Long-term Neurological Condition”

- Neurological conditions are caused by damage to the brain, spinal cord and other parts of the nervous system.
- Some conditions are present at birth (congenital); some develop later in life; others are caused by illness or injury.
- Approximately 10 million people across the UK have a neurological condition. They account for 20% of acute hospital admissions and are the third most common reason for seeing a GP.
- There are many such conditions which affect people's daily lives in different ways and to different degrees. Some are relatively common (eg multiple sclerosis); others are rare (eg motor neurone disease).
- Because of the wide range of long-term neurological conditions, the NSF does not attempt to address each of these separately. But, because services have to respond quickly when people have a rapidly progressing condition (such as motor neurone disease), their specific needs are identified in the NSF.
- Neurological conditions affect people of all ages, but this NSF concentrates on services for adults.

What is a National Service Framework?

A National Service Framework (NSF) sets out Quality Requirements, including markers of good practice. These describe the services the NHS and Social Services need to provide. It also aims to reduce differences in the treatment, care and support people receive now, because of where they live or because of their cultural background.

In recent years, six other NSFs have been published for different conditions and groups of people. The NSFs for coronary heart disease; diabetes; renal disease; mental health; older people; and children, young people and maternity services are already making a positive difference for these groups of people and their families.

What does this National Service Framework aim to achieve?

The NSF aims to make sure that services for people with long-term neurological conditions and their families and carers are:

- Quicker and easier to use;
- More closely matched to people's needs;
- Better coordinated – so people do not have to see too many professionals and tell them the same information about themselves again and again;
- Provided for as long as people need them, so that treatment continues without the need for a new referral every time the person has a new problem;
- Better at helping people with neurological conditions and their carers to make decisions about care and treatment;
- Provided by people with knowledge and experience of specific conditions;
- Giving people with long-term neurological conditions better results from their treatment;
- Planned around the views of people with long-term neurological conditions and their carers;

- Able to give people more choice about how and where they get treatment and care;
- Better at helping people to live more independently.

What does this NSF cover?

There are 11 Quality Requirements in the NSF. They cover the following:

1: A person-centred service

This is a main theme that runs throughout the NSF. All people with long-term neurological conditions are offered a full assessment of their health and social care needs. In addition, they are to be offered information and education about their condition; the chance to make decisions about their treatment; and to be involved in writing a plan about how their needs will be met (a care plan).

2: Early recognition followed by prompt diagnosis and treatment

Anyone suspected of having a long-term neurological condition is to quickly see a doctor or other professional, with expert knowledge of that condition. They should have tests, be given a diagnosis and have any treatment they need. This should be as close to home as possible. This is so that a correct diagnosis and appropriate treatment happens as soon as possible.

3: Emergency and acute management

Anyone admitted to hospital for a neurosurgical or neurological emergency is assessed and treated by professionals with the right skills and experience who have access to the right facilities and equipment.

4: Early and specialist rehabilitation

Anyone with a long-term neurological condition who would benefit from rehabilitation is to receive timely, high quality rehabilitation services in hospital or other specialist settings when they need them.

When ready, they are to receive the support they need to return home for more community rehabilitation and support.

5: Community rehabilitation and support

People with long-term neurological conditions living at home are to

receive a full range of rehabilitation, advice and support to meet their continuing and changing needs. This is to increase their independence and help them to live as they wish.

6: Vocational rehabilitation

People with long-term neurological conditions are to have appropriate support to help them find or regain employment, to remain in work or to pursue educational opportunities.

7: Equipment and accommodation

People with long-term neurological conditions are to have the equipment they need (such as wheelchairs), within an appropriate time frame and to have adaptations made to their homes as and when needed, to support them to live independently; help them with their care; maintain their health; and improve their quality of life.

8: Personal care and support

Health and social care services are to work together to ensure that people with long-term neurological conditions are given the care and support they need to live independently in their own homes wherever possible.

9: Palliative care

People with long-term neurological conditions nearing the end of their life are to have access to a range of palliative care services as and when they need them, to control symptoms and offer pain relief, and to meet any personal needs they may have.

10: Support for family and carers

All carers of people with long-term neurological conditions are to receive appropriate support and services which recognise their needs as a carer and as an individual in their own right.

11: Care during admission to hospital or other health and social care settings

All people with long-term neurological conditions are to have their specific neurological needs met when they are receiving care for any other reason in any health or social care setting.

How will these Quality Requirements be delivered?

Local NHS and Social Services are responsible for reviewing their services to see if they already meet the Quality Requirements in this NSF. They will need to get the views of local people with long-term neurological conditions and their families and carers, as well as the views of voluntary organisations and professionals. This will help them to decide their local priorities for making changes and improvements, to meet the Quality Requirements in full over the next ten years.

Where can I find out more?

Other useful information can be obtained from the following organisations:

Carers UK

20-25 Glasshouse Yard
London EC1A 4JT

Website: www.carersuk.org

Tel: 020 7490 8818

Fax: 020 7490 8824

Email: info@carersuk.org

The Neurological Alliance

Southbank House
Black Prince Road
London SE1 7SJ

Website: www.neural.org.uk

Tel: 020 7463 2074

Fax: 020 7735 1555

E-mail: admin@neural.org.uk

The Long-term Medical Conditions Alliance (LMCA)

202 Hatton Square
16 Baldwins' Gardens
London EC1N 7RJ

Website: www.lmca.org.uk

Tel: 020 7813 3637

Fax: 020 7813 3640

Email: info@lmca.org.uk

These organisations will also be able to provide details of more specialist organisations for particular long-term conditions.



Further copies of this leaflet are available free from:
DH Publications Orderline
PO Box 777
London SE1 6XH
Tel. 08701 555 455

This leaflet, as well as the NSF in full, is also available on the
Department of Health's website at www.dh.gov.uk/longtermnsf

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