

Northern Acquired Brain Injury Forum
Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd July 2009
at Northern Counties School

Many thanks to Judith James and Tony Best at Northern Counties School for their hospitality.

Northern Counties has grown from a school for 8 children with Cerebral Palsy to an establishment providing "cradle to grave" education for about 450 students (some residential), employing about 500 staff.

Northern Counties merged with Percy Hedley in 2005 and has expertise in providing services to children with Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties, Hearing Impairment, and those on the Autistic Spectrum.

Services include residential places Monday – Friday, a newly opened College to provide a transition into adult services for students with complex needs, adult day and residential services, respite care (mainly for children at the school but it is hoped this will be extended to others), vocational courses, and assistance into employment.

Facilities include swimming and hydrotherapy pools, a sensory room, a light stimulation room and outdoor play areas. There is nursing and medical support available throughout the school day and into the evening for resident pupils. The staff includes specialist teachers (including fully qualified teachers of the deaf), tutors, therapists, learning support workers, and highly experienced communication support workers (all of whom are able to sign).

For further information go to www.percyhedley.org.uk/ncs/index.asp.

Many thanks to Paul Johnston and Bruce Skilbeck of The Huntercombe Group for their presentation "Caring for Clients with Challenging Behaviour: Abbeymoor Neurodisability Centre, Swalwell."

The Huntercombe Group have plans to develop their facilities at Abbeymoor to help meet the need for places for clients with severely challenging behaviour. They would welcome input from organisations and professionals who have an interest. Contact Bruce Skilbeck at Bruce.Skilbeck@fshc.co.uk.

Many thanks to Viv Watson and Angela Langthorne of Partners in Specialist Care for their presentation "High Dependency care in a Community Setting"

Partners in Specialist Care provide care packages in the community to clients with complex medical and nursing needs. For further information please contact info@partners-care.co.uk or telephone Viv Watson on 01429 239616.

Business Meeting

In Attendance

Professor Mike Barnes, Paul Saxon, Janet Grace, Simon Richell, Julie Roberts, Viv Watson, Jackie Waggott, Andrew McDonald, Helen Hastie, Alastair McDonald, Mark White, Alison Langthorne, Paul Brown, Claire Dowling, Nick Hedley, Alison Langthorne, Alison Ainsley, Paul Johnston, Anne Johnson Alison Smith.

1. Apologies for absence

Heather Batey, Steven McAleese, Janice Thomson, Helen Atkin, Helen Seabury, Nick Guteridge, Lucy Fallon, Pauline Birchall, Ben Townsend, Kirsty Petley, Deborah Jackson, Alistair White, Jacque Owen and Anne Hunter.

2. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes were agreed, with no matters arising.

3. Walkergate Park Transition Project

Dr Janet Grace explained that funding has been obtained for a 2-year pilot scheme to put in place a transition team to support patients from the Neuro-Psychiatric wards (wards 2 and 3) at Walkergate Park into the community.

A team, consisting of a full-time psychiatrist, nurse and OT, will follow a training and supervision model, providing training to other providers of services to discharged patients.

The goal is achieve a reduction in the use of other services and reduce the length of stays and re-admissions to hospital. It is hoped the pilot will lead to funding for a substantive team that will be able to provide services to a wider group of patients.

4. NABIF Conference 2009

The date of the NABIF Conference is Friday 30th October 2009.

The theme of the conference is "*long term consequences and challenges of ABI*". Speakers include Dr Alex Goody (Walkergate Park), Dr Ivan Pitman (Birt), Dr Peter Tucker (Young Peoples Neurorehab Unit, Royal National Hospital for Rheumatic Diseases), Gerard McDermott QC (Temple Chambers), Howard Jackson (Tru), Professor Mike Odey (Birt), Boda Gallon (Chase Park Rehabilitation Centre).

5. UKABIF Update

Mike Barnes provided a brief update from UKABIF. There are new "ABIF's" starting up in North Wales, Bristol, West Midlands, East Midlands and Northern Ireland. The only large geographical "gap" is in Wales. The spread of ABIF's is encouraging.

The new UKABIF website will soon be in operation. It will include a service mapping exercise and the opportunity to advertise jobs.

The next UKABIF conference will take place on 11th November 2009 at Russell Square with international speakers. Details are available on the UKABIF website. There will be a meeting of ABIF's afterwards, of which NABIF should be represented.

Lobbying continues through the APPG on ABI, chaired by Bob Russell MP. The meetings are quite well attended. The last meeting dealt with the Armed Services Compensation Scheme and the cap under the CICA Scheme. Another topic of interest at the Group is brain injury and prisons.

6. Service Mapping Update

We have been seeking funding to put the results of the service mapping exercise on the NABIF website. This has not come to fruition. At the present time NABIF does not have the funds to pay for this ourselves, although that may change if the October Conference is successful.

As UKABIF will be publishing the results of their service mapping exercise on the UKABIF website it would make sense for us to liaise with them. It may be possible to include the results of our exercise on the UKABIF website and put a direct link on the NABIF website. We will follow this up once we have had an opportunity to look at the UKABIF website.

7. North East Neurosciences Network

The NENN has obtained funding to put in place a mentoring scheme. The aim is for specialists to move out of their area to train others (mentoring) as part of a two year training program. The funds are to provide cover whilst the mentors are working out of area. There have been initial meetings. The general feeling is that the scheme has received a cautious welcome.

8. Any other business

None.

9. Next meeting

The next meeting will take place on Friday 11th September, 12 – 2pm at St James Parish Church, Carlisle.