



**Neuro Rehab Forums
Summary of findings and
Recommendations
December 25**

Experts in MS

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‘People like me don’t need miracles. We need movement, motivation, meaningful connection, and a place where we’re seen, heard, and supported.’

Lived Experience of MS

Background

At the MS Society, our Service Improvement and Policy work has had a focus on neuro-rehabilitation since 2022. Our aim has been to get a more accurate picture of the neuro-rehab landscape and service offer post Covid - and to enable the sharing of best practice and encourage the uptake of optimal pathways and best practice models, whilst identifying opportunities for both local and national improvements.

This has included hosting a series of webinars on neuro rehabilitation in 2024 / 25 you can find the links to these webinars on the [Experts in MS website](#)

In 2024 the stakeholder engagement and policy team in the MS Society formed a steering group of people interested in developing the discussion of service development of neuro rehabilitation. It was agreed to run some face-to-face forums as well as online webinars as part of this work.

The first took place in Scotland in June 2025 and the second took place in Chester in September 2025 focused on developing discussion across the Cheshire and Mersey and North Wales area. A wide range of NHS health care professionals, commissioners and transformation leads, people living with neurological conditions and neurological condition charities were invited to attend.

Joint Recommendations and Learning

1. Review the Neurorehabilitation Pathway

A thorough review of the existing neurorehabilitation pathway should be carried out. The review should map the current pathway against the Optimal Neuro-Rehab Pathway. The discussions raised the need to develop the Optimal Neuro-Rehab pathway in line with the focus in health boards across the UK. Particularly to bring services closer to home and enable people to access services in the community as well as being able to refer into the pathway from community services. It was noted that currently referrals to the pathway only come from inpatient services.

The review should also consider the workforce needs of the service looking ahead to future population needs including use of innovative roles such as the Advanced MS Champion role.

2. Communication

Difficulties with communication were repeatedly identified as a problem by attendees at the event. This was the case between NHS teams and with 3rd sector partners. There is no effective EPR system that all services and teams can access including 3rd sector organisations. Explore a single point of access for services or similar. Need to develop more effective communication between different teams as not all teams can access electronic patient records, and any 3rd sector interventions are not recorded. There is a need to simplify referral pathways, introduce hospital alert system for patients across a range of conditions similar to the Parkinsons alerts. Explore the possibility of a patient passport to ensure patients and clinicians are aware of treatment that their patients have received.

3. Stronger Patient Voice

Need to ensure all the relevant stakeholders are involved and listened to in this service development with a specific focus on ensuring people living with the conditions are included. They need to be supported to contribute to and influence the development of the neuro-rehab services.

In relation to the collaboration/ co-production with people with lived experience and voluntary and community sector, this needs to include leisure services, social services and other activity providers. It should not be a discharge out to these services but incorporating them as part of the pathway and enabling referral up and down the pathway. There is a need to see the patient at the centre of care as an expert.

4. Mental Health Support

The discussions highlighted a lack of neuropsychology support within the service and generally within wider mental health services for people with long-term neurological conditions. Referrals are often not accepted as too complex. In the recent My Neuro Survey conducted by the Neurological Alliance,

- **69%** of people who needed neuropsychiatry support couldn't access the service.
- **62%** of people could not access neuropsychology services.
- **48%** of people were unable to access counselling.

There is a need to develop more specialist resources and to integrate mental health services more effectively into the treatment pathway. Strengthening / context on the point about mental health - Mental health support is integral to rehab - 'People won't engage in physio if they are in a difficult state of mind.' Need a joint holistic assessment that encompasses mental health and neuro physio / OT etc.

Need to update and develop existing optimal pathway in the light of the push to closer to home / community services and 'Patients often 'screened' out by historical ways of working and out-of-date processes.'

5. Betsi Cadwaladr UHB Model

Developing a strong link between the 3 neuro physios allocated to East, Central and North Wales and the community physio teams was seen as a positive with one person commenting, "the neuro physio team had 'turned a weakness (geographically large area) into a strength' by reaching out to community services."

This needed to be balanced with the importance of having specialist staff as was acknowledged in the presentation on the model in North Wales.

6. Cost Effectiveness

There is a need to demonstrate the cost effectiveness of rehab interventions to support movement of money / provision in the community. Quote from Paul on the figures:

So, 92% of the... of the patient activity comes from community, but only 18% of the finances attributed to that 92% of people. The other 82% of the money is going to 8% of patients. It's just in absolute contrast to what the 10-year plan is telling us to do.

7. Hands on or hands off physiotherapy?

A need to acknowledge the complexity of neuro condition presentation that could require hands on, whilst acknowledging the positive benefits of hands off. Need to consider the evidence base for both hands on and hands off. Some physios felt you can't do neuro physio without being hands on at times.

8. Opportunities

- Work on long-term conditions at regional and national level needs to include neurological conditions.
- Neighbourhood hubs need to include long term neuro conditions as part of delivery in the Devolved Nations this can link to incorporating neurological conditions therapeutic support into primary care and community teams' delivery.
- Opportunities to shadow between specialist and community teams to develop training and sharing of expertise and knowledge of roles.
- AI Transcribers for physios would save time in writing up notes.
- Access to the right equipment doesn't all have to be expensive – FES for hands / Lived experience example of a matted / safe area to crawl about and fall in a gym.

Next Steps

The MS Society is committed to developing the discussion and delivery of neuro rehab services and will, following these forums:

- Share the report from the event and discuss with the Glasgow MS Partnership Forum. Establish working groups to focus on recommendations and take forward.
- Identify other key stakeholders in the Greater Glasgow and Clyde area needed to support the delivery of the recommendations.
- Hold another Neurorehabilitation focused event in Glasgow or the surrounding area to continue to develop this work.
- Continue to support the development of the Cheshire and Mersey neuro rehab review and services from this together with all relevant stakeholders working with the neuro charities active in the area and supporting people with lived experience to influence the review.
- Continue to work with the Welsh review of neuro rehab services and support it's implementation across Wales.
- Focus on influencing UK wide work on neuro rehab through the development of a policy statement and promotion of good practice in this area of work.

Links to Full Neurorehabilitation Forum Reports

- [Glasgow Neurorehabilitation Forum Report](#)
- [North Wales, Cheshire and Merseyside Forum Report](#)

We're the MS Society.
Our community is here for
you through the highs, lows
and everything in between.
We understand what life's
like with MS.

Together, we are strong
enough to stop MS.
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