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PRESS RELEASE

Wales takes the lead in improving cancer care standards

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE or the Institute) has launched its 7th National Collaborating Centre (NCC). The Collaborating Centre has responsibility for developing guidance for the NHS on treating and caring for people with cancer. It is the first NCC to be based in Wales.

The NCC is based at Velindre NHS Trust in Cardiff, in partnership with the University of Wales College of Medicine. It is headed up by Dr Fergus Macbeth a consultant oncologist. Jane Hutt, Assembly Minister for Health and Social Services at the Welsh Assembly Government, will formally launch the NCC at 9am on Wednesday 2nd April at Velindre Hospital.

The Minister said “I very much welcome the decision taken by NICE to establish the National Collaborating Centre for Cancer here in Wales. It acknowledges the level of experience in cancer care that exists here at Velindre NHS Trust and the University of Wales College of Medicine, Cardiff and recognises the high standards and dedication of health professionals working in this area”.

Professor Peter Littlejohns, Clinical Director at NICE, said: “I am delighted that we are launching the National Collaborating Centre for Cancer today, its work will be

invaluable to both health professionals and those using cancer services in England and Wales. The Institute has a significant work programme on cancer, and it has quickly become apparent we need a team experienced in cancer care developing guidelines for the NHS.”

Dr Fergus Macbeth, Director of the National Collaborating Centre for Cancer, said: “All the staff at Velindre are very excited at this unique opportunity to contribute to the national drive to improve cancer services in the NHS in England and Wales. Over one in three people will develop cancer at some point in their life. We hope that the work of the Centre will complement the current initiatives and help to ensure that patients receive the best possible treatment no matter where they live.”

Joanne Rule, Chief Executive of CancerBACUP and Board Member at the NCC Cancer said, “I welcome the opportunity to be a part of this much needed organisation. The incidence of cancer is on the rise, and although treatments for cancer are getting better, the provision of services across the NHS is still patchy. Developing national guidelines means that people with cancer will know what they can expect from the teams looking after them. They can check out their care against agreed best practice.”

Ends

Notes to Editors

About NICE

1. NICE is part of the NHS. It is the independent organisation responsible for providing national guidance on treatments and care for those using the NHS in England and Wales. Its guidance is for healthcare professionals and patients and their carers to help them make decisions about treatment and healthcare. For further information about NICE you can visit www.nice.org.uk.
2. NICE produces guidance in three areas of health:
 - the use of new and existing medicines and treatments within the NHS in England and Wales – technology appraisals
 - the appropriate treatment and care of patients with specific diseases and conditions within the NHS in England and Wales – clinical guidelines.

- whether interventional procedures used for diagnosis or treatment are safe enough and work well enough for routine use– interventional procedures.

NICE also funds four enquiries that undertake research into the way patients are treated to identify ways of improving the quality of care (the investigations are known as confidential enquiries).

3. NICE guidance and recommendations are prepared by independent groups that include professionals working in the NHS and people who are familiar with the issues affecting patients and carers.

About National Collaborating Centres

4. The National Collaborating Centres develop clinical guidelines for the NHS in England and Wales, placing healthcare professionals and patients at the heart of the decision-making process. Each Centre has the resources, expertise and experience to develop 'best practice' guidance which will help healthcare professionals and patients make informed choices about appropriate healthcare.
5. The seven Centres are the National Collaborating Centre for:
 - Acute Care – based at the Royal College of Surgeons of England
 - Cancer – based at Velindre NHS Trust in Cardiff
 - Chronic Conditions – based at the Royal College of Physicians
 - Nursing & Supportive Care – based at the Royal College of Nursing Institute
 - Mental Health – jointly led by the British Psychological Society and the Royal College of Psychiatrists
 - Primary Care – based at the Royal College of General Practitioners
 - Women & Children's Health – based at the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists

Each Centre involves a number of partner organisations which represent both healthcare professionals and patients.

6. Full details of the process by which the Collaborating Centres develop clinical guidelines, together with the clinical guideline topics being considered by each Centre are published on the NICE website at www.nice.org.uk.
7. Clinical guidelines are recommendations on the appropriate treatment and care of patients with specific diseases and conditions within the NHS in England and Wales. They sit alongside, but do not replace, the knowledge and skills of experienced health professionals.
8. NICE and the National Collaborating Centres are committed to involving patient/carers and healthcare professionals in the development of guidance through a robust and transparent process that includes:
 - agreeing the scope i.e. what the guideline or audit will cover
 - establishing a multidisciplinary development group to manage the work
 - searching, appraising and synthesising research evidence

- incorporating expert opinion
 - developing key recommendations and audit criteria for the NHS
 - consulting on provisional guidelines
 - publishing and disseminating guidelines and audit advice to the NHS, medical professionals, patients/carers and the wider public
 - running national audit projects to review and improve the quality of health care
9. Patient and professional organisations whose members may be affected by a guideline can contribute to the initial scope, formation of the development group and submission of evidence. They are also consulted on provisional guidelines before the final document is published.

About the NCC for Cancer

10. The National Collaborating Centre for Cancer is based at Velindre NHS Trust in partnership with the University of Wales College of Medicine in Cardiff. It will involve also the following partners:
- CancerBACUP
 - National Cancer Alliance
 - The Royal Colleges of Physicians, Pathologists, Surgeons, Radiologists and Faculty of Clinical Oncology
 - And other stakeholders in the professional and voluntary sectors (a full list can be found on the website at <http://www.nice.org.uk/catcg1.asp?c=20055>)

For further information about the centre contact Dr Fergus Macbeth on 02920 316232.

The guidance currently under development by the National Collaborating Centre for Cancer are Child, Adolescent Cancer and Skin Cancer. These will be followed by Brain Tumours and Adult Sarcomas.