

The future of self-management

Christine Hoy has been seconded for two years to the Scottish Government as Project Manager for Self Care. Her role will be to identify and share areas of best practice and to highlight the role of self management education for both staff and people with long-term conditions.

'I became interested in case management and the role of self management in long term conditions many years ago, after learning about how care was organized in other countries.

The Scottish government is keen to develop the concept of self management and the long term conditions steering group, chaired by the Chief Medical Officer, has representation from the Long Term Conditions Alliance Scotland; the Alliance have drafted a strategy for self management in long term conditions and will present it to the steering group before the end of the year.

Although many people discover techniques for helping themselves and become experts in managing their condition, there is need to share this expertise with health and social care professionals. As people with multiple sclerosis will know self management techniques are particularly important; being properly informed about local and national sources of help and advice, how best to cope with pain, who to talk to, knowledge of medications, all play a part in increasing confidence and feeling in control.

I have visited many areas of Scotland and been very impressed with the enthusiasm for self management. However, I think one of the challenges is trying to explain what it means; self management is a term that is open to misinterpretation. There is a risk that people think this means they may be abandoned; self management should be viewed more as a means to share treatment decisions, instill confidence and raise self esteem.

You asked what the best bit so far has been in the post; I think that was Olivia Giles' inspirational address to the Allied Health Professionals conference. Olivia, who lost both lower arms and lower legs in 2002 after contracting meningitis, spoke very eloquently about the best and worst aspects of being cared for in hospital, the experience of rehabilitation and being discharged home. Her story reminded the audience of the importance of including patients as part of the team and the need to communicate effectively.

If any readers have ideas or comments about self management I would be delighted to hear from you – please get in touch:

Christine.hoy@scotland.gsi.gov.uk