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## The NHS Long Term Plan and **Cancer**

The NHS Long Term Plan commits to reshaping the NHS over the next decade, with a strong focus on rehabilitation. Physiotherapy has a strong role to play in this.

This briefing highlights the commitments in the Long Term Plan for cancer.

The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP) and Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Oncology and Palliative Care (ACPOPC) are engaging with NHS England and stakeholders like Macmillan, to influence the national direction being taken to put the Long Term Plan into practice.

However the important decisions about what services are funded, and how these will be designed will be made locally, by commissioners and providers organised in Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships (STPs), which will later evolve into Integrated Care Systems (ICSs).

During 2019 STPs are required to produce five-year plans setting out how they will do this. To achieve the potential improvements in cancer rehabilitation, it is essential that physiotherapy has a voice in this.

## Long Term Plan Commitments on Cancer Rehabilitation

The Long Term Plan promises that everyone with cancer will have a care plan based on a full assessment of their needs, and maximise the potential for community-based support.

***“By 2021, where appropriate every person diagnosed with cancer will have access to personalised care, including needs assessment, a care plan and health and wellbeing information and support.***

***This will be delivered in line with the NHS Comprehensive Model for Personalised Care. This will empower people to manage their care and the impact of their cancer, and maximise the potential of digital and community-based support.***

***Over the next three years, every patient with cancer will get a full assessment of their needs, an individual care plan and information and support for their wider health and wellbeing.***

***All patients, including those with secondary cancers, will have access to the right expertise and support, including a Clinical Nurse Specialist or other support worker.”***

**NHS England Long Term Plan para 3.64**

It is up to physiotherapy and other rehabilitation clinicians to ensure that this personalised care includes rehabilitation, to optimise the effectiveness of treatment and manage the consequences of it – including symptoms that occur further down the line.

## Long Term Plan Vision for Community Rehabilitation

The Long Term Plan promises development of integrated community and primary healthcare services nationwide, with multidisciplinary teams operating out of community hubs.

To deliver services for people with and beyond cancer, these need to be properly resourced and set up as part of the cancer pathway, with active involvement of oncology and palliative care physiotherapists in their design.

## Key Messages from the CSP and the ACPOPC on Local Implementation

- **Rehabilitation** should be available from diagnosis – in the form of prehabilitation – continuing throughout treatment and beyond, including rehabilitation for those with palliative care needs
- **Health systems** (e.g. STPs/ICSs) need to consider how best to integrate acute and community services across cancer and palliative care rehabilitation. This will improve patient flow, reduce barriers to treatment and facilitate effective, safe discharge from services
- **The oncology** physiotherapist’s role includes the assessment of individual’s complex needs and provision of specialist treatment to address these needs. They may also refer to community rehab teams, exercise professionals and voluntary sector groups
- **Health systems** should ensure that everyone with cancer or palliative care needs has physiotherapy and uncomplicated access to appropriately qualified physiotherapists to meet their needs, no matter where in their cancer or palliative journey they are. This should include people whose needs arise some time following completion of their cancer treatment
- **Community rehab teams** need to have open access to cancer rehab teams to ensure hand over-systems are effective, for specialist advice and training, and if necessary for referrals back in when complex rehabilitation needs emerge – including for physiotherapy interventions for pain, breathlessness and loss of mobility and function.

There are many examples of excellent services and models of rehabilitation pathways that demonstrate all of these features. Members working with such services have a key role to play in communicating the success of these.

## Demonstrating Population Need

To achieve the expansion of rehabilitation services needed, physiotherapy clinicians must be able to demonstrate the health needs of their local population.

This could include the rehabilitation necessary from the point of diagnosis to optimise outcomes from treatment, as well as minimising the impact of cancer and cancer treatment on longer term mobility and function.

## Demonstrating Impact of Rehabilitation for People Living with and Beyond Cancer

Physiotherapy clinicians need to demonstrate the impact of their service on people living with and beyond cancer, and what the impact would be if they were able to develop and expand.

**Priority areas to demonstrate impact will include:**

- **Cancer survival**
- **Levels of independence** and disability
- **Ability to manage** common co-morbidities – such as depression
- **Time spent** in hospital and readmissions
- **Health inequality** in the population
- **Economic value** of services.

## Developing the Rehabilitation Workforce

All STP areas have a Local Workforce Action Board, and they will be developing workforce plans for delivery of the Long Term Plan in your area.

To develop rehabilitation services for cancer patients, there needs to be an expansion and development of the rehabilitation workforce. Central to this are physiotherapists and support workers.

Year on year there are growing numbers of physiotherapy graduates in England. This growth needs to be translated into posts through gradual expansion of the rehabilitation workforce.

Supporting the continuation of growth in physiotherapy education to supply the NHS and expanding posts needs should form part of local workforce plans.

It is also important to invest in the existing workforce. Physiotherapists working in roles that are not oncology specific need support and training to provide treatment to cancer patients accessing their services. Oncology Specialist Physiotherapists may be able to play a role in supporting Clinical Nurse Specialists, a professional group who are facing issues with recruitment, by exploring the skill mix and functions within roles of the oncology teams. The use of advanced practice courses could be developed to support oncology physiotherapists to achieve this.

Another priority is the investment in therapy support workers to further develop their skills – for example through training in exercise prescribing and coaching skills. This will ensure more people living with and beyond cancer can access appropriate support.

This growth and development of the physiotherapy workforce to deliver the promises for personalised care for people with and beyond cancer must be reflected in local workforce plans and staffing decisions by employers.

A more detailed briefing on the physiotherapy workforce requirements to deliver the Long Term Plan will be available at a later date

## What Can You Do?

- **Find out** how Long Term Plans are being developed in your STP area
- **Find out** how your employer is feeding into Local Workforce Action Board plans and how to influence this
- **Find out** if AHP clinical leads are part of these planning processes and make contact with them to see how you can work together
- **Where AHP clinicians** are not part of the discussion, push for them to be
- **Share ideas** with other CSP members through your networks, including iCSP
- **Share case studies** of service design through the CSP’s Innovations Database
- **See evidence briefing** Physiotherapy Works for Cancer Survivorship.

## The CSP – We’ve Got Your Back

For more information on taking the Long Term Plan forward locally – including advice on demonstrating population need and impact – contact the CSP’s Campaigns and Regional Engagement Team [cre@csp.org.uk](mailto:cre@csp.org.uk) or see the CSP member briefing on the Long Term Plan

Contact ACPOPC, either through our [website](#) or via Twitter [@ACPOPC](#)