

## QuDoS Multiple sclerosis: NHS case studies 2019

### Outstanding MS nurse Karen Vernon

#### Your name, job title and centre

Karen Vernon, MS nurse consultant, Salford Royal Hospital

#### Project / initiative name

Neurological Examination Course – Training for MS nurses

#### Project start date

2012



#### Challenge

1. The role of the MS nurse has evolved considerably in recent years.
2. As relapse management started to become more nurse led, Karen was aware of a lack of skills in terms of physical neurological examinations.
3. This lack of knowledge can impact on the quality of neurological examination reports and holistic relapse management.

#### Solution

1. A practical course was developed with the input of expert nurses and consultants and with sponsorship from Teva UK.
2. The programme runs over a Friday evening and all day Saturday, twice a year. It utilises a slide deck, case scenarios and workbooks developed by the team.
3. The course is delivered by consultants and MS nurses.
4. The Friday session is theory based, covering the basics of why a neurological examination is carried out and what to look for. It also includes interactive case study learnings.

## Solution cont...

5. The Saturday session, held in the hospital's clinical skills lab, is more practical. A consultant goes through the examination and nurses can then "practice" on each other. In the afternoon, volunteer patients attend the course. The nurses then carry out neurological examinations on the patients under the close supervision of medical staff.
6. The course was piloted among nurses in the northwest of England before being offered nationwide.

## Results

1. The course is so popular that it consistently has a waiting list.
2. It is an example of an effective way to upskill the nurse workforce on taking a holistic approach to relapse management.
3. The team consistently receive very positive feedback – people say the course has had a very positive impact on their practice.
4. The course contributes to effective succession planning by ensuring the next generation of MS nurses have the skills they need to deliver holistic care.

## Next steps

We would like to develop an advanced neurological assessment course. It is likely that this will take the form of an online learning module or e-learning package.

## What was the biggest challenge?

Logistics – arranging travel and accommodation for the attendees and ensuring there are enough staff and volunteer patients to run the course.

## How did you overcome the challenge?

Teva UK, the course's pharmaceutical company sponsor, does a lot of the organising.

The team are fortunate to have a group of patients who are willing to give their time up for this course as they can see the importance of this in upskilling MS nurses.

## What would be your advice to others wanting to replicate this project?

- Use the facilities at the hospital if you can.
- If using patient volunteers, chose them carefully. You need people who understand your vision and are easy to work with.
- Secure buy in from the consultants at the very start.

## Testimonial quote



**From a  
colleague**

Karen continually develops and transforms services. She's grounded, approachable, straight talking and simply an amazing person."

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