**Integrated Care Communities explained: professional of the day**

Health and care services in north Cumbria are working closer together through the development of Integrated Care Communities (ICCs) to improve the health and wellbeing of local people and ensure people are treated in the best place for their needs.

Since July, ICC coordination hubs have been in place to manage referrals to community services such as nursing, therapy and adult social care. Referrals are taken by teams of trained administration staff who work closely with health, care and voluntary organisations and a lead professional of the day.

The professional of the day makes decisions about the most appropriate care for individuals. This ensures support can be arranged quickly and seamlessly between different organisations. Kirsty Franklin and Suzanne Robinson, Occupational Therapists in Eden ICC, explain more about the role.

**What is the main role of the professional of the day?**

It’s really about triaging referrals (requests for support) and coordinating staff. We join the daily huddle - a short meeting involving various professionals - to identify what resources are available and the workload for the day. It gives us a good understanding of the capacity of the ICC team so we know who is most suitable for each patient and we can plan what support to provide.

Each day we get a list of patients from Eden who have attended A&E in the past 24 hours. We go through this to see if they are known to any teams and see if we can help to get them home from hospital or if they’re already home, look at what support they might need.

We’re also involved in a weekly Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) meeting to consider patients with complex needs in more depth. With people from different services, such as Adult Social Care, GPs and community health teams, all involved we can escalate concerns and put joint support in place much quicker than we were able to before ICCs were introduced. Previously it could feel like a game of ‘telephone tennis’ ringing different teams to try to coordinate all of the necessary services.

**Who can take on the professional of the day role?**

At the moment in Eden its Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapists but in the future this will also include other professions such as District Nurses. We take on the role several times a week in addition to our own case load so it does involve a bit of juggling! It’s always done by experienced staff and draws on their knowledge to make rapid clinical decisions.

**How does the role help patients?**

Having one person coordinating a response means less duplication and decisions are often faster and more efficient than they would have been in the past. We have lots of different professions working together as one team which makes communication much easier. By working together we’re able to see more complex patients than before who previously may have needed a hospital stay for specialist support.

**Who do you work with and how does the role help colleagues?**

Having one professional of the day means that everyone knows who to go to for advice or information. We are clear on the capacity of the team and by working as part of the ICC we can quickly draw upon the expertise of other professionals for guidance and support.

The list of teams that we work with really is endless, from Adult Social Care, Community Nurses, GPs, Practice Nurses and Mental Health teams to Home First, wards at the Cumberland Infirmary or West Cumberland Hospital, equipment providers, voluntary organisations, care providers, special and of course patients and their families. And that’s just naming a few!

**Are there any challenges?**

It’s still early days for ICCs and new ways of working always take some time to settle. As we build up relationships with colleagues across the health system things continue to improve and become easier and you can see the potential that ICCs have for patients. Capacity can be a challenge but we continue to recruit and have more staff starting soon. We’re a good team and always come together to support each other – everyone does what they can to help.

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