

New independent working group aims to advance stoma care services across England

Monday 9th October, 07:30 – Today at the Association of Stoma Care Nurses UK Annual Conference, closely following on from Ostomy Awareness Day, Coloplast UK and Ireland has announced that a group of leading experts (specialist nurses, surgeons, third sector representatives and healthcare consultants) from across the stoma community have come together to launch an exciting, new, independent working group and project: *Advancing Stoma Care Services: Evidence-based Proposals for a Best Practice Pathway (ASCS)*. Driven by a shared vision, the group's aim is to ensure the delivery of consistent high-quality care and management for all patients with a stoma in England, wherever they live.

Speaking on behalf of the new ASCS project group, Dr Peter Carter, Independent Healthcare Consultant, former CEO of the Royal College of Nursing said:

"I'm excited to be leading this project group and by our shared vision: to implement a practical solution to ensure everyone living with a stoma has access to the same level of care wherever they receive treatment, so that no one is left behind. To do this, our project will explore what best practice in stoma care looks like, including recognition of the important role of specialist nurses, and ensure that our recommendations are based on the best available, current, valid and relevant evidence."

In keeping with this year's conference theme – 'Making Waves and Influencing Practice' – the expert project group will undertake research and develop an evidence-based proposal for a national and standardised best practice pathway for stoma care. This will set out a structured approach to the treatment, management and follow-up that need to be provided by a multidisciplinary team to deliver optimal patient care, whether the stoma surgery is elective or emergency. The format will follow that of an NHS England Getting It Right First Time (GIRFT) programme of work, although this is not an official GIRFT project.

Despite an estimated 160,000–205,000 people living with a stoma in the UK, and 21,000 people who are thought to require stoma formation surgery each year¹, there is currently a lack of National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance on stoma care. Today, it is left to the various NHS Foundation Trusts to develop their own stoma care management pathways, meaning there is significant variation in the care and services received by patients across England – with some receiving high

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quality care based on the most up to date evidence whilst others do not, simply because of where they live.

Consultant Surgeon and GIRFT National Clinical Lead for General Surgery, Mr Mark Cheetham, said:

“As a practicing colorectal surgeon, every day I see the benefits of high quality stoma care for our patients. This work will be really important in identifying and spreading areas of good practice in stoma care. Beyond that, the bigger prize lies in reducing unwarranted variation across the UK and ensuring that all people have access to good, standardised stoma care regardless of where they live.”

Dr Terri Porrett, Strategic Project Manager at Coloplast added:

“As a former specialist stoma care nurse, I’ve seen first-hand the improvement in the care delivered to patients living with a stoma over the past 20 years and want to thank nurses for continuing to play such a crucial role in advancing stoma care. However, I also believe that more needs to be done to tackle the variation in care. That’s why I’ve established this project and working group – with a united purpose to advance patient experience across England – and I welcome others to join from across the stoma community.”

ENDS

Notes to editors

About Advancing Stoma Care Services: Evidence-based Proposals for a Best Practice Pathway (ASCS):

ASCS is an expert group of project members from across the stoma care community who have come together with the intention to advance stoma care services across England. Building on project group members’ experience, research and data, patient insights and existing best practice, the group will seek to drive the delivery of consistent high-quality care and management for all patients with a stoma in England. To achieve this aim, it will collectively identify an evidence-based national and standardised best practice pathway for stoma care in the format of an NHS England Getting It Right First Time (GIRFT) programme of work.

The group was initially established by Coloplast UK but is independent and members have editorial and clinical review and control of the final outputs. Current involvement includes:

- **Dr Peter Carter**, Independent Healthcare Consultant and former CEO, Royal College of Nursing
- **Dr Mark Cheetham**, Consultant Surgeon and National Clinical Lead for General Surgery, NHSE
- **Filipe Carvalho**, Colorectal Nurse Consultant

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- **Alex Hall**, IBD Nurse Consultant
- **Mr Richard Brady**, Consultant Colorectal Surgeon
- **Caroline Bramwell**, PR and Communications Manager, Ileostomy and Internal Pouch Association
- **Wendy Osborne**, Clinical Governance Lead, Coloplast, and ASCN UK Council Representative
- **Natasha Rolls**, Lead Stoma Care Nurse
- **Paul Trevatt**, Independent Healthcare Consultant
- **Dr Terri Porrett**, Strategic Project Manager, Coloplast

Further information can be found [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

About Getting It Right First Time (GIRFT):

Getting It Right First Time (GIRFT) is a national and well-recognised programme within NHS England, which seeks to improve the treatment and care of patients through 'in-depth review of services, benchmarking, and presenting a data-driven evidence base to support change.' Further information about the initiative can be accessed [here](#).

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¹ British Journal of Nursing. Not a bag for life... a bag for living. Available at: <https://www.britishjournalofnursing.com/content/product-focus/not-a-bag-for-life-a-bag-for-living>. Last accessed: September 2023.

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