



Information Leaflet for Health Professionals

The National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS) began in 2007 with a purpose to standardise exercise referral opportunities across all 22 local authorities. It is the only National Exercise Referral Scheme in the UK.

A randomised controlled trial was commissioned in 2007 to determine the scheme's effectiveness in increasing participation in physical activity, improving health in patients at risk of chronic disease and providing potential savings to the health service. The main findings of the evaluation were:

- All participants in the scheme had higher levels of physical activity than those in the control group, with this difference being significant for those patients referred for coronary heart disease risk factors.
- There were positive effects on depression and anxiety, particularly in those referred wholly or partially for mental health reasons.
- The economic evaluation demonstrated a cost per QALY of £12,111, which is well within the NICE threshold for cost effectiveness of £20,000 - £30,000, and for those who adhere to the full programme the scheme is likely to be marginally cost saving (£-367 per QALY).

Full results are available at:

[www.wales.gov.uk/about/aboutresearch/ social/latestresearch/exercise/?lang=en](http://www.wales.gov.uk/about/aboutresearch/social/latestresearch/exercise/?lang=en)

It is an evidenced based national programme that provides an opportunity for patients to access a high quality supervised exercise programme, with the aim of improving health and wellbeing through long-term participation in physical activity.

Following the evaluation the National Coordinator has developed chronic conditions pathways in partnership with policy leads from the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy in order to meet the new level 4 National Occupational Standards for Exercise Professionals to work with clients with chronic conditions.



NERS comprises two distinct but interrelated elements:

- Exercise Professionals that are registered at Level 3 of Register of Exercise Professionals (REPs) provide 'generic' NERS sessions for 'low risk' population groups that need some support to increase fitness and reduce general risks of developing chronic conditions. (16 week programme) means of secondary prevention. (16-48 week programme)
- Level 4 (REPs) Exercise Professionals provide more specialist NERS sessions for population groups deemed to be 'higher risk' and needing to undertake tailored exercise sessions as part of their rehabilitation following an intervention by the NHS or to manage a chronic condition and use exercise as a means of secondary prevention. (16-48 week programme).

Approved training has been commissioned and standardised protocols for delivery of evidence based community based sessions suitable for clients with the following chronic conditions have been developed in partnership with Allied Health Professionals*:

- Phase IV cardiac Rehabilitation
- Respiratory Disease
- Falls Prevention
- Exercise Following Stroke
- Chronic Back pain
- Obesity/Diabetes
- Mental Health
- Cancer

*Availability is dependent on local resource of fully qualified staff.

How do Health Professionals refer?

The referral process has been simplified with easier access to protocols and referral forms/criteria to select appropriate programme for patient's needs. We are seeking to implement one protocol across Wales. Referral forms and exclusion criteria can be found at www.nersdb.info



What are the benefits to me as a Health Professional?

All schemes will be operating to nationally agreed standards, with all exercise professionals trained to meet national guidelines. You can be reassured that your patients will receive the highest quality service, and that the protocols used are based in the best practice from across Wales.

You will be contributing to an ongoing evaluation which is of international importance and we will be able to provide you with information on your patient's progress.

How do I get involved?

You will be contacted by the local exercise referral scheme coordinator when any new conditions are going to be introduced in your area scheme. They will explain how you sign up.

What if I still have some queries?

Please visit the following websites:

NERS Website: <http://wlga.wales/national-exercise-referral-scheme-ners>

Local Authority NERS Coordinators:

<http://wlga.wales/co-ordinator-contact-details>

NERS Manager for Wales:

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