

**Plans to produce and update SW SCN Cancer Protocols, and to make these available for open access on SW SCN website: summary for the South West Chemotherapy Group**

## **Introduction**

Following concerns raised across the SW, the Strategic Clinical Network has been working on a way to ensure that clinicians across the SW have access to updated cancer treatment protocols.

NHS England's Chemotherapy Clinical Reference Group plans to develop a series of national chemotherapy algorithms that will define the range of chemotherapy regimens that are routinely commissioned by NHS England (or where applicable, funded through the Cancer Drugs Fund). The aim of this work is to clearly define what NHS England routinely commissions in relation to Chemotherapy and to ensure that the prescribing of chemotherapy is informed by national algorithms. Overall, this will help ensure patients across England have equitable access to the most effective chemotherapy drugs.

However, there remains a need to produce and update the corresponding protocols which will support the safe and effective use of the recommended chemotherapy regimens. The protocols will also support the governance process of adding regimens to trust e-prescribing systems. There are no current plans to produce national cancer protocols, and this responsibility remains with the individual trusts. The Strategic Clinical Network is keen to help trusts to share this workload and to support clinicians to work together on this across the region.

## **Plan of action**

We sent out a questionnaire on governance processes for chemotherapy treatment, to see what is currently happening with cancer protocols in trusts across the SW. We have so far got 11 replies. Four trusts are using ASWCS protocols, five are producing their own in house protocols, two are using Thames Valley protocols, and one is using Central South Coast Network protocols. All trusts have a governance process for dealing with off protocol prescribing. We will produce a more in depth summary of the replies when we get the last few back.

In order to support SW trusts in producing and updating cancer protocols, we have managed to engage some expert help from Sarah Murdoch, specialist oncology

pharmacist for one day a week, and are hoping to have Dr Jeremy Braybrooke Consultant Medical Oncologist working with us for one session a week.

Sarah and Jeremy are planning to work with the Site Specific Groups and clinicians throughout the region to develop a set of SW SCN protocols, as a resource available to all on the SW SCN website. Sarah is asking for volunteer specialists to help her to identify which of the old ASWCS protocols should be archived or updated, and where new protocols are required. We will work with the SCN website planners to develop a user friendly cancer section, with open access to updated and new protocols.

It would be really helpful to Sarah and Jeremy to have as much engagement as possible with this process across the SW trusts. The SCN protocols will be a resource that trusts can adopt if they choose, and so it is important that the new protocols are adaptable and useful to all. Your input will be needed to make this work well. Trusts will of course be free to use their own, or alternative network protocols, and will remain responsible to their service commissioners for the quality and safety of their services.

### **Next steps**

It would be useful to get some thoughts and feedback from the next **South West Chemotherapy Group on 22<sup>nd</sup> April** on these plans. In particular we would welcome views on how best to;

- prioritise this work to be most useful and timely to trusts
- engage and involve cancer clinicians across the whole of the SW
- communicate progress and get feedback from clinicians on protocols produced

It would be interesting to discuss what the role of the South West Chemotherapy Group will be in supporting this work, in the context of the wider Cancer SCN work plan, and the terms of reference of this group.