Wales National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS)

“It’s More Than Exercise Prescription, It’s a Way of Life”

November 26th 2015

Jeannie Wyatt-Williams
National Exercise Referral Coordinator for Wales
Overview of session

- What is NERS?
- Why did Wales set up NERS?
- How did we set up?
- Overview of Random Control Trial Evaluation
- How and what have we developed?
- Partnerships working examples.
What is NERS?

NERS is an evidenced based health intervention developed in 2007 to support referred clients to make healthy lifestyle changes to improve their health and wellbeing.

The Scheme originally targeted clients who were at risk of developing CHD and those with mild moderate anxiety (Level 3 Exercise Referral delivery) and was funded by Welsh Government.

In 2008 a National Coordinator was appointed by WLGA.

In 2009 NERS developed delivery to include those with chronic conditions to meet Welsh Government priorities (Level 4 Specialist Instructor delivery)

In 2012 funding was transferred to PHW and has continued annually following successful outcomes of the Health Impact Review.

Scheme is coordinated by WLGA and funded until March 31st 2016.
Current Structure

Operates in 22 local authorities

1 National NERS coordinator

26 local NERS coordinators (1 whole time equivalent per area)

136 Level 4 qualified Exercise Professionals (Currently 96.6 whole time equivalents)
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>WLGA/Jeannie</th>
<th>NERS Level 3</th>
<th>BACPR Phase IV</th>
<th>L4 Respiratory</th>
<th>PSI Level 4</th>
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Why was NERS Developed?

Prior to NERS, many areas offered exercise referral schemes but funding was due to expire.

WG agreed to fund a scheme, contingent on implementation of standardised national protocols and evaluation results.

WG commissioned independent randomised controlled trial along with an economic evaluation of effectiveness for mental health and / or CHD risk referrals.

To estimate the effect of NERS on physical activity, anxiety and depression, compared to the provision of an information leaflet and normal care.
NERS RCT Evaluation Results

Proved effective in increasing activity for referred clients

Proved a significant decrease in anxiety /depression for clients referred with mental health and CHD risk factors.

Clients adhering to the full intervention; were more likely to continue exercising independently

The analysis lead to a conclusion that NERS is 89% likely to be cost effective at just over £12,000 per QALY, and for those who adhere to the full programme the scheme is likely to be marginally cost saving(-£367 per QALY)

http://wales.gov.uk/about/aboutresearch/social/latestresearch/?lang=en
Integration of Health and the National Exercise Referral Scheme in the Prevention and Management of Chronic Conditions

1. Primary Care Consultations
   - Condition Specific Clinics etc.

   Motivational Interviewing/Brief Interventions
   - Done GP/Practice Nurse or NERS professional/PARQ+ opportunity once validated

2. Condition Specific Health Education/Support Programmes
   - Smoking Cessation
   - Expert Patient
   - Diabetes
   - Breathing
   - Community Dieticians etc.

   Foodwise4Life Nutrition Education Programme delivered by NERS Coordinator/Exercise Professional

3. Rehab Programmes with Specific Exercise Component
   - Cardiac Rehabilitation
   - Pulmonary Rehabilitation
   - Orthopaedic Lifestyle Pathways
   - Stroke/Falls/Cancer etc.

   Specific Exercise Component Level 4 Instructor

Exit Routes delivered by suitably qualified/registered Instructors

Mainstream Leisure as available at locally agreed cost.

Partner Projects
- Lets Walk Cymru/Ramblers
- Age Cymru
- Welsh Rowing
- Sustrans
- Groundwork etc.

Private Leisure providers/Personal Trainers
- MyWellnessKey personal purchase

Prepared by Jeannie Wyatt-Williams Version 4
NERS two distinct but inter-related 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, primary prevention.

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.
5 Stage Approach to change

Stage 1
Project proposal

Proposal agreed by NERS steering group

Stage 2
Step by step problem solving

Solutions developed

Stage 3
Education, training & communication to team

Review, re-start

Stage 4
Implementation planning

Permanent solution achieved?

Stage 5
Implementation in Pilot sites & Follow up

Roll out & Monitor

No

Yes
# Stakeholder Review

## Key players

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locality Stakeholders</th>
<th>National Stakeholders</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Referral partners</td>
<td>• WG / LHB / PHW senior manager and condition specific leads</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Support groups/ Breatheasy etc.</td>
<td>• LA / senior manager / CCLOW meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• NERS exercise professionals</td>
<td>• Primary Care representatives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• General Population</td>
<td>• Training providers</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Leisure centre staff - especially receptionists</td>
<td>• Charities- BLF, Age Concern and BHF.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Health professional bodies CSP, GP Forums,</td>
<td>• National Bodies BHFNC, Skills Active Sports Wales etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Other associated schemes, LWC, Expert Patient, Actif Woods, Come Outside etc.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Local Exercise Referral Co-ordinators &amp; their Line Managers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Funding providers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• University/Research Opportunities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Relevant Councillors - Ministers</td>
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</table>
**NERS Process Chart**

**No**

- GP/AHP to determine if client meets criteria

**Yes**

- GP/AHP Provides information about the scheme

**No further action**

- Patient does no want scheme

**Patient wants scheme**

GP/AHP completes referral form and informs patient they will be contacted within 4 weeks.

- NERS referral form received and checked by Coordinator; a suitable Exercise Professional is identified and a letter sent inviting them to 1:1 consultation or open sessions as appropriate

- NERS EP completes 1:1 consultation to include:
  - Informed consent
  - Health questionnaire
  - Goal Setting
  - SPAQ
  - Height/Weight/BMI
  - 6 Minute Walk etc.
  - EQ-5D

- Depending on assessment outcomes co morbidities / readiness to change

- Exercise sessions led by NERS Level 3 qualified instructors x 16 weeks

- 4 week review goals & signpost to exit routes as appropriate remembering to complete 16 week re-assessments

- 16 week re-assessment of all previous tools, review goals

- Exit to suitable activities

- Coordinator/EP sends referral update letter to GP at 16 week stage

- 52 weeks review of all previous tools, review goals
# NERS Chronic Condition Referral Routes & Delivery Options

## NERS Level 4 Chronic Condition Referral Routes and Delivery Options

**GP / AHP**
- Condition specific referral form completed and sent to NERS Coordinator

**Condition specific Specialist Physiotherapist / Occupational Therapist**
- Condition specific form completed and sent to NERS coordinator

**NERS 1:1 Baseline Assessment;**
- Health Questionnaire / Informed Consent
- Goal Setting

**Assessment tools selected from:**
- TUAG
- 10 M Walk
- EQ-5D
- FACIT Fatigue
- SPAQ
- etc.

Depending on assessment outcomes and impairments present:

- **PSI Falls Prevention**
  - 48 week programme

- **Stroke**
  - 16-32 week programme

- **Community Respiratory Post Rehabilitation**
  - 16-32 week programme

- **Back Pain**
  - 16-32 week programme

- **Cancer**
  - 16-32 week programme

- **Phase IV Cardiac Rehabilitation**
  - 8-16 week programme

- **Obesity / Diabetes**
  - 16-32 week programme

- **Mental Health**
  - 16-32 week programme

**16 week NERS Level 3 programme**

**Conditions are suitable for combined delivery**
- in either exit route sessions or with green partner schemes following 4th / 8th week review

**Conditions possibly suitable for combined delivery of evidenced based PSI FaME and Otago**

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Wales National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS)
Cynllun Atgyfeirio Cleifion i Wneud Ymarfer Corff Cymru
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Details</th>
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| 1 | Preparing to Change for Life | - State the reasons why weight loss is important to them as an individual  
- Demonstrate an understanding of the myths and facts around weight management |
| 2 | Eatwell plate | - Demonstrate an understanding of the ‘Eat Well Plate’ and its role in weight management  
- Suggest healthy eating tips in relation to each food group and individual food diaries |
| 3 | Portion Sizes & You | - Discuss portion sizes of commonly eaten foods in relation to Eatwell plate  
- Discuss the concept of energy balance in relation to weight management |
| 4 | Up & about | - List 5 benefits of physical activity and 3 ways in which they could increase their levels of activity |
| 5 | Food Labels | - Identify which packaged foods are high or low in fat, sugar, salt and saturated fat  
- Demonstrate an understanding of choosing healthier options |
| 6 | Focus on Your Food | - Discuss the importance of regular meals.  
- Suggest strategies on how planning ahead can support weight management  
- Demonstrate an understanding of the differences between hunger and craving and managing these. |
| 7 | Food & Drinks Swaps | - Suggest suitable swaps for high calorie food and drinks.  
- Suggest ways to make healthier swaps when choosing a takeaway/ eating out. |
| 8 | Changing for Life | - Discuss the importance of sources of support and rewards.  
- Suggest possible strategies to manage weight long term. |
How was it for the Participants Then & Now

http://www.wlga.gov.uk/dvd/

Pam Beall my NERS graduate is going to give you an overview of how NERS has impacted on her life.
Partnerships / Signposting

- Groundwork
- Natural Resources Wales
- Local Conservation Groups
- Coed Lleol / Actif Woods
- Come Outside
- LA Sports Development
- Lets Walk Cymru / Ramblers
- Age Cymru / Nordic Walking/LIFT
- RSPB reserves
- Best Foot Forward Breast Cancer support group.

- Welsh Rowing, Coastal and River Rowing Clubs
- Football Association Wales Walking Football
- Cynefin/ People and Places.
- Local Authority & National Parks and Gardens
- Local Authority Health and Social Care
- NERS graduates Support Groups (Community Chest Funding)
Gwynedd
Community Gardens

NERS Partners

- Proposal to the Leisure Service for permission
- Grant Application – Soil Association
- Raising Awareness in the community
- Create Partnerships
- Engaging Stakeholders
Physical Activity
“Not a Dumb Bell in Sight”
Gwynedd’s 2\textsuperscript{nd} Community Garden Open Day

Wales National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS)
Cynllun Atgyfeirio Cleifion i Wneud Ymarfer Corff Cymru
Community Garden
Outcomes

• Recognised as a pioneering programme to engage people with common ground and wider environmental concerns
• Succeeded in its aim to improve people's access to green space by planting trees and holding community activities
• Dwyfor Leisure Centre received an NHS Forestry Award only the second one in Wales to be registered and also awarded the Keep Wales Tidy Green Flag Award

• Gwynedd Council have donated another two sites for development as community gardens also a GP has donated ground at his surgery for development recognising the health benefits of gardening “physical activity by stealth “
Monmouth NERS participants and graduates represent Wales in Profound flash mob link http://profound.eu.com/profound-stay-strong-stay-steady-campaign-eu-flash-mob/
To launch “Stay Strong Stay Steady Campaign ” for Older Persons Day Oct 1st 2015

Monmouthshire's NERS team have established a close link with Lets Walk Cymru to train NERS graduates as volunteer walk leaders establishing peer led exit routes. This is being replicated in other areas
Actif Woods - not just for Conservation!

- Art and Craft
- Woodland Gym
- Foraging & conservation
- Meditation and Relaxation
- Story Telling
- Educational Walks

Following last year's budget cut areas took up the opportunity to be funded by Actif Woods to deliver sessions suitable for referred clients and general populations in the woodland.
Parkinson's Cymru & NERS Pilot

Group Results

- Baseline
- 16 Week

Graph showing improvements in various parameters over time.
The Starlings set up with Community Chest Grant as a volunteer exit route from NERS were told last week that they have been awarded the Insport Ribbon award from Disability Sports Wales. They have become the first Exercise Referral group to be awarded this recognition. Here they are playing walking Basketball.
Walking Football in Bridgend, operates in two sites very popular. These are all Cardiac Referrals.
Conwy Health Precinct

Partners on Board!

Betsi Cadwalader University Health Board (BCUHB) Therapy Services
Conwy County Borough Council (CCBC) Leisure
Communities First
Children’s Services
Social Services
Flying Start
Public Health Wales (PHW)
Welsh Rugby Union (WRU)
GP Practices
Others….

Professionals on site

Doctors
Sport Development/Academy Physiotherapists
Occupational Therapists
Nurses
Carers
NERS Exercise Professionals
Leisure Centre staff and management

Benefits for NERS and General Populations

It’s a one stop shop referral between partners is Quicker and easier
Support and mentoring easily accessible
Saves time and costs
Additional funded projects

• BCUHB Lifestyle Management Pathway

• Cwm Taf Joint Care Pathway

• ABMU and Hywel Dda Pathway for Pregnancy

• Aneurin Bevan Live Well Live Longer
Benefits of PARQ+ for NERS

Evidenced based tool to appropriately signpost referral to correct level of supervision

Address the issue of recommendation versus referral to exercise

Reduce strain on NERS to enable delivery for the additional chronic conditions more effectively

Validated tool would enable safe appropriate self referral to NERS
Take Home Message

We must work in partnership reduce bureaucracy and barriers if we are to succeed in getting the population of Wales fitter and healthier by getting them to sit less and move more every day.

No one organisation can succeed alone

http://www.wlga.gov.uk/english/dvd/
Elizabeth had a hip replacement 7 years ago but never had any Physiotherapy and it has caused me problems ever since, I had been walking with a walking stick for over 8 years. I got recommended by my G.P to go on the National Exercise Referral Scheme. I spent 16 weeks attending 2 to 3 times a week. By the end of this period my hip is like new, I do not use my stick anymore and it feels much stronger and stable. It has been a very positive experience for me and I am continuing to attend the gym as I have experienced a lot of other positive benefits as well.
Ken (75) – Suffers from COPD, he used to cough up phlegm a lot throughout the day, especially first thing in the morning or when walking, during the initial 1 hour consultation he coughed up phlegm over 10 times. During his first gym session he started on the treadmill where he lasted less than 2 minutes at 2 mph before having to leave the gym as the phlegm build up was so bad. He went on to attend 3 times a week for 16 weeks gradually building up the intensity and duration and by the 16th week he could walk easily for ½ hour at 4.5 mph with a 8% incline and he no longer experiences any coughing up of phlegm, throughout his day at all.
John Sheppard – A MRI Scan finally identified the problem. Three dehydrated discs in the lumber region causing constant back pain during everyday movement. The 16 week referral scheme started off quite arduous, but with regular class sessions in the gym and circuits to help strengthen core muscles, improve flexibility, coordination and balance; and the support and encouragement from the instructor helped me to persevere and life became easier.

I am very aware that I need to keep up my activity level to remain capable of doing and enjoying the normal things in life like golf, gardening and walking and prevent recurrence of back pain.
Joanna M Waite - “Words are totally inadequate to quantify the numerous benefits I have gained from the Exercise Referral Scheme. As a result of increased fitness I was able to participate in the Pembrokeshire Coast Path Walk, 186 miles of varied, beautiful, interesting and magnificent coastline. My aim now is to maintain the level of fitness gained with the help and support of the Exercise Professional and Instructors at the leisure Centre”. My bone scan results following programme have shown an increase in bone mineral density of 2.4% in the spine and by 3.0% in the hip since the previous scan.
Thank you / Diolch

Jeannie Wyatt-Williams
National Exercise Referral Coordinator
www.wlga.gov.uk/ners

E: jeannie.wyatt-williams@wlga.gov.uk
T: 029 2046 8516
M: 07500 556045