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## **HELPING PATIENTS TO TAKE CONTROL OF LONG-TERM ILLNESSES**

### **PCTs able to commission self-management courses for people with long-term conditions**

More people across the country with long-term illnesses will soon be able to be supported to have greater control over their conditions, increasing their confidence and improving their quality of life.

In a pioneering approach, the Department of Health has established the Expert Patients Programme as a Community Interest Company (EPP CIC) – the first time a government department has set up a social enterprise organisation.

Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) will be able to commission the EPP CIC to run self-management courses for patients to help them better manage their conditions – and even to train volunteers to run courses in their area.

The new EPP CIC will mean that patients have greater access to courses on how best to manage their illness which can mean that they avoid unnecessary hospital trips. Early findings suggest that through better self-management, A&E attendances have been reduced by over 15 per cent for people who have attended an EPP course. The EPP CIC will also be able to develop new courses and tailor existing courses to increase the number of people who will benefit and to meet changing needs of patients.

Health Minister Rosie Winterton said:

“This is an excellent opportunity for PCTs to help patients in their local area to better manage long-term conditions. By commissioning these courses, they are investing in

self-care and empowering patients, increasing social capital and improving community health. Knowing how to best manage a long-term condition reduces the need for expensive emergency care - this is better for patients and for the local NHS.”

Harry Cayton, National Director for Patients and the Public, said:

“Self-management is an integral element of care for people with long-term health conditions. The EPP CIC is an exciting opportunity for self-management programmes to be provided more widely across health and social care.”

Stephen Jacobs OBE, Chair of the EPP CIC said:

“The EPP CIC will be able to make a difference to the lives of the large number of people living with long-term health conditions. We particularly hope to aim a number of our services towards those in some of the most socially excluded communities – for example, we now have a series of courses for minority ethnic groups translated into nine languages, as well as courses for those who care for others who have a long-term health condition. It is particularly important to work with other health professionals to understand the value of our courses for their patients – a task which the EPP CIC will also undertake.”

The Expert Patient Programme Community Interest Company will go live on 1 April, with the aim of increasing the number of course places every year from 12,000 to 100,000 by 2012.

[ENDS]

#### Notes for Editors

1. The Expert Patients Programme Community Interest Company (EPP CIC) will officially go live on 1 April 2007.
2. Internal evaluation data from approximately 1,000 EPP participants indicates that the programme provides significant numbers of people with long-term conditions with the confidence and skills to better manage their condition on a daily basis and a reduction in their use of services:
  - 45 per cent felt more confident that they would not let common symptoms (pain, tiredness, depression and breathlessness) interfere with their lives
  - 38 per cent felt that such symptoms were less severe four to six months

after completing the course

33 per cent felt better prepared for consultations with health professionals

16 per cent reductions in A&E attendances

10 per cent reductions in outpatient visits

7 per cent reductions in GP consultations

9 per cent reductions in physiotherapy use

3. The EPP provides a lay-led, group based support for people in the self management of their long-term condition. The programme is aimed at a wide range of people from different long-term conditions and age groups, geographical location and ethnicity. The EPP is delivered locally by a network of trainers and 1400 volunteer tutors with long-term conditions.

4. The EPP focuses on five core self-management skills: problem solving; decision making; resource utilisation; developing effective partnerships with healthcare providers and taking action. The programme offers a tool-kit of fundamental techniques that patients can undertake to improve the quality of their life living with a long-term condition.

5. The course enables patients to develop their communication skills, manage their emotions, manage daily activities, interact with the healthcare system, find health resources, plan for the future, understand exercising and healthy eating, and manage fatigue, sleep, pain, anger and depression.

Bilingual trainers have been recruited to deliver courses in non-English speaking communities. The course material is available in six different languages. Further developmental work is underway to provide adapted courses for parents of children with long-term conditions, children and young people, carers, prisoners and people with mental health problems.

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