MINISTER MEETS AWARD-WINNING LEARNING DISABILITY NURSES IN WEST WALES

Health Minister Edwina Hart will today [Tuesday, 29 July] meet a group of award-winning nurses who provide care for people with learning disabilities and epilepsy in West Wales.

The nurses, winners of the Welsh Assembly Government’s 2007-08 Mental Health and Learning Disability Nursing Awards, invited the Minister to meet the team and see the care and support available to people with learning disabilities in the region.

The Awards aim to raise the profile and recognise the hard work and dedication of mental health and learning disability nurses across Wales.

Mrs Hart said: “I was pleased to accept the invitation from the nurses to meet them all and to see first-hand the work they do.

“Often the work of learning disability nurses gets overlooked, but they have an important role to play in the health service.

“Their awards recognised their work in the development and maintenance of high-quality services for people with learning disabilities and epilepsy in West Wales.

“I am committed to further improve these services in Wales. Indeed, Wales is leading the way in improving epilepsy services, and is the first in the UK to consult on a major plan to help with this neurological condition.

“The plans include measures to reduce the incidence of epilepsy, help people to self-manage their condition and provide more care closer to people’s homes – reducing the likelihood of hospital admission. It is estimated that well-managed medication procedures can help around 70 per cent of people with epilepsy to be seizure-free – thereby reducing the risk of emergency admission and improving their quality of life.

“We are currently finalising these plans following the consultation and will publish them in the Autumn. I expect that people with epilepsy will start to see a real difference early next year.”

Jane Harris, General Manager of the Learning Disability Service, Hywel Dda NHS Trust said: “Members of staff are very pleased that Mrs Hart has found time in her schedule to meet with them and to work to develop services for people with learning disabilities.”

Notes:
Health Minister Edwina Hart will visit the Epilepsy Unit and Learning Disabilities Nursing Team at 1 Penlan Road, Carmarthen, SA31 1DN at 12.30pm today [Tuesday, 29 July 2008].

You are invited to send a reporter/photographer/camera crew to the event.

The Minister presented the 2007-08 annual Mental Health and Learning Disability Nursing Awards on 13 March 2008 in Cardiff.

This annual event, which is in its third year, attracted more than 50 nominations in nine categories. Two out of the three awards for Learning Disability Awards were won by two nurses from Pembrokeshire and Derwen NHS Trust, now the Hywel Dda NHS Trust.

Best Learning Disability Community Nurse – Anne Phillips, for being the leading and driving force in the development and maintenance of high quality services for people with learning disabilities and epilepsy in Carmarthen.

Best Learning Disability Residential/In-patient Nurse – Sarah Dudley is the senior team leader at the Ty Bryn in-patient unit at Hafan Derwen, Carmarthen. The award recognises her outstanding leadership skills and high standards of management of these clients, who have very challenging needs.

More information on all the winners at this year’s annual awards:


The new plans to improve epilepsy services in Wales were unveiled by the Minister on 8 February 2008:

http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/health/news/08-02-08-epilepsy/?lang=en