

## **THYROID UK WINS PLACE ON DH PILOT SCHEME**

### **New quality assurance on the way for health and social care information**

Thyroid UK has been chosen by the Department of Health from over 120 applications to participate in the testing phase of a new scheme to ensure good quality information across the health and social care sector.

The information accreditation scheme will combat substantial variation in the quality of health and social care information available and will provide a way for the public and professionals to know that the information they are using is reliable.

It will also support information producers in raising general standards and will be focused at the organisation level – accrediting the source of information rather than the information itself.

Thyroid UK is testing the scheme alongside others from the commercial, public and voluntary sectors. Subject to achieving certification through this testing phase, Thyroid UK will become one of the first scheme members when it launches in 2009.

Ann Keen MP, the parliamentary under-secretary for health services, said, “There is so much information out there that it’s hard for people – both the public and professionals – to know what can be relied upon. A scheme with a recognisable quality mark, will assure them that information is from a dependable source.

“Over 120 applications were received by DH and Thyroid UK is one of just 40 organisations to have successfully made it through the application process. The work of these test sites will be invaluable in providing knowledge and insight for organisations who are considering joining the scheme in the future.”

As part of the testing phase we will be involved in:

- testing the scheme Standard
- sharing our experiences in order to support the development of case studies
- helping to develop the visual identity of the quality mark.

We will keep you updated on our progress over the coming months.

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#### **For further information contact:**

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For further DH information on the information accreditation scheme:

Email: [accreditation@dh.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:accreditation@dh.gsi.gov.uk)

Contact: Clare Wener, Department of Health, 020 7972 3726

## Notes to editors:

1. The information accreditation scheme will 'kite mark' organisations that produce health and social care information. The scheme will be focused at the organisation level – accrediting the source of information rather than the information itself – through certification against a national Standard. The public would be reassured through a recognisable quality mark. This enables the scheme to have a broad impact as it can be used to mark information in any format – from websites to pamphlets. For further details on the scheme please visit: <http://www.dh.gov.uk/accreditation>
2. *“People need to be supported to make better decisions about their own health and welfare because there are widespread, systematic barriers to decision making. These failures include a lack of full information....”*  
(Wanless, D., 2004, *Securing Good Health for the Whole Population*, HM Treasury)
3. *“We must continue to empower patients with greater choice, better information, and more control and influence.”*  
(*High Quality Care for All: NHS Next Stage Review Final Report 2008*)
4. Preliminary research was undertaken into an information accreditation scheme and information specialists surveyed anticipated several benefits:
  - a. improved information quality
  - b. increased revenue for information providers
  - c. enhanced trust in the information from health professionals
  - d. greater use of the materials by the people who use health and social care services and the public
  - e. improved public image for the information producers
  - f. wider recognition of best practice.(Coulter, A. & Ellins, J., 2006, *Patient-focused interventions: A review of the evidence*, Picker Institute Europe)
5. NHS Direct will be overseeing the testing phase on behalf of the Department of Health. Once the scheme is launched in 2009, it will be run by an independent scheme owner. The scheme owner is being procured this year through an open procurement process.
6. The scheme is based on rigorous community-built standards for information producers. It will establish certification and testing procedures that will help information producers become accredited. The scheme will also provide support for information producers across the public, voluntary and commercial sectors in their efforts to achieve and maintain accreditation.
7. The scheme standard has been developed through engaging with accreditation experts, organisations involved in standards development and information producers.

8. The 40 successful organisations are:

**Voluntary sector**

Arthritis Care  
Asthma UK  
Brain & Spine Foundation  
Breast Cancer Care  
British Dietetic Association  
British Heart Foundation  
Cancer Research UK  
Diabetes UK  
Disabled Living Foundation  
Epilepsy Action  
Macmillan Cancer Support  
MIND  
Multiple Sclerosis Society  
National Association for Colitis and Crohn's Disease  
Penny Brohn Cancer Care  
Rethink  
RNIB  
Sue Ryder Care  
Terrence Higgins Trust  
The Blood Pressure Association  
The Carers Resource  
The Prostate Cancer Charity  
The Stroke Association  
Thyroid UK

**Public sector**

Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust  
Doncaster PCT  
Hartlepool Borough Council Adult & Community Services Department  
National Institute for Clinical Excellence  
Oxfordshire County Council's Social and Community Services  
Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust  
Poole Hospital NHS Foundation Trust  
Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust  
Royal Marsden NHS Foundation Trust  
Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust

**Commercial sector and other**

BUPA  
BMJ Group  
Datapharm Communications  
DIPEX  
Patient UK  
The Royal College of Psychiatrists