

AFA holds Parliamentary event to promote Quality Standards for patients

Wednesday 25th January 2012: Glyn Davies MP, chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on AF (Conservative, Montgomeryshire) recently hosted an event in the House of Commons to highlight the importance of promoting high quality standards of care for patients. Speaking alongside him was CEO and Founder of the AFA, Trudie Lobban, and two patient speakers, Martin and Chris.

The meeting focused on the challenges faced by those diagnosed with AF and the importance of a securing a Quality Standard in AF to set out NHS guidelines on what best practice in treatment, care and support means. MPs, Lords and medical professionals gathered to hear the first hand experiences of two patients both diagnosed with AF and to debate what they would like to see included in any Quality Standard that is developed over the coming years.

A Quality Standard (to be developed for use in the NHS in England) is a set of 10-15 statements setting out high quality care which commissioners and clinicians should work towards. The Standard can also be used by patients so they can see what type of care they should be receiving.

Attendees heard how those with AF are often not effectively diagnosed and a lack of information provided by the NHS leaves them without the answers that they need. Similarly, problems with late diagnosis can lead to stress as well as negative implications for work and family life.

In order to improve patient care, the Parliamentary Group discussed how the NHS can best eliminate these problems. Attendees agreed that by introducing a Quality Standard to highlight best practice, the NHS can better deliver high quality care. They also discussed what in particular should be in a Quality Standard - such as access to arrhythmia nurse or access to information.

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Following the meeting it was agreed that the AFA and All-Party Parliamentary Group would work with patients and AFA supporters to continue to lobby for an effective Quality Standard on AF which will ultimately help commissioners, clinicians and patients see what good quality care should look like.

Ends

Notes:

1. The Atrial Fibrillation Association (AFA) is an international charity which provides information, support and access to established, new or innovative treatments for Atrial Fibrillation (AF);
2. AF is the most common 'arrhythmia' – a heart rhythm disturbance. It is estimated that more than one million people in England are living with AF, and between 50,000 and 100,000 new diagnoses are made each year.