Background

The UK Sepsis Trust is a registered charity bringing together leading experts, grassroots health professionals, survivors, persons bereaved by sepsis and expert communicators. Supported by the English Royal Colleges and by the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, the charity aims to fix the healthcare system’s response to sepsis, to raise awareness among health professionals and the public, and to provide support for patients and their relatives.

The UK Sepsis Trust’s work in England

The UK Sepsis Trust has been campaigning in England for several years for a wide ranging public awareness campaign on sepsis, aimed at the whole population, rather than just a specific demographic, in a similar way to the FAST campaign for stroke.

The UK Sepsis Trust discussed with government, NHS England and Public Health England what would best work to raise awareness with the public and healthcare professionals.

The campaign that will be launched before the New Year will be the start of an ongoing public awareness campaign in England which will grow in scale and reach.

What NHS England has committed to:

Awareness

- The Secretary of State for Health has committed to a package of support across the health professions and stakeholder groups, to aid earlier diagnosis of sepsis in young children
- Public Health England is working in partnership with the UK Sepsis Trust (UKST) to deliver a campaign, to be launched in December 2016, to help parents and carers of children under 5 to improve their knowledge of what sepsis is, the symptoms and when to seek urgent healthcare advice
- NHS England are working with the UK Sepsis Trust to broaden awareness to the general population through sepsis graphics and banners on ambulances and other vehicles, in pharmacies including on dispensary bags, and in GP surgeries and hospitals
- The Department of Health in England has mandated Health Education England to work with UKST to increase healthcare professional awareness through additional training

Other initiatives

- New financial incentives for hospitals will be developed, building on the introduction of previous financial incentives in 2015 – new 2017 CQuIN guidance will be linked to the guidance aimed at reducing antibiotic resistance
- Beyond 2019, more robust/ incentivising commissioning levers are being discussed
Improving consistency and transparency of reporting – NHS England intends to introduce a sepsis specific indicator to the Clinical Commissioning Group Improvement and Assessment Framework in 17/18. The new ratings will provide a snapshot of how well different areas of the country are identifying and treating sepsis, showing areas in need of improvement, but also highlight areas of best practice for sharing amongst professionals.

Process and outcomes from sepsis will be published by hospitals into the public domain.

Distribution of new educational materials to support healthcare professionals. Health Education England have produced new education and training materials in partnership with UKST to increase awareness of sepsis amongst professionals.

Safety netting for GPs and parents: some GP software companies have already introduced pop-up reminders and printed information for GPs to give to parents of sick children explaining what to look out for and when to bring the child back to be urgently seen again. All commissioned software, in all practices, should include such a package, to ensure the information is available consistently.

Early Warning Score system: to improve the identification and treatment of sepsis across the whole patient pathway all areas should use a consistent National Early Warning Score to assess how sick patients are across the whole local health system – from hospitals, to ambulance trusts, to GP practices.

Information on sepsis included in the ‘Red Book’: the personal child health record or Red Book is given to every new parent to keep track of their child's health and progress. The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health has updated the national template to include information on how to tell if your child is seriously ill.

**The UK Sepsis Trust's work in Wales**

The UK Sepsis Trust has now been campaigning with a specific focus in Wales for around three years with the major aim of influencing, supporting and securing a wide ranging public awareness campaign on sepsis, aimed at the whole population, rather than just a specific demographic, in a similar way to the FAST campaign or the more recent organ donation campaign.

The UK Sepsis Trust has met with the Health Secretary and Welsh Assembly Government and have engaged with both Public Health Wales and NHS Wales informally as to what would best work to raise awareness with the public and healthcare professionals.

Working with the above our goal is for a Public Awareness campaign aimed at the whole population based on the theme of both public and health professionals alike asking the question “Could this be Sepsis?”

**Our approach and milestones so far**

Engagement with Welsh Government is key and we have:
- Used World Sepsis Day each year as a hook and encouraged Welsh Assembly Government Health Minister to attend events. This led in 2013 to, the then Health Secretary, Mark Drakeford AM committing to making sepsis a tier one illness. We have invited the Health Ministers to come to or be represented at World Sepsis Day events each year as maintaining the focus at a government level is essential.

- We have held two events at The Senedd. One Sponsored by Health Secretary Vaughan Gething AM (then Shadow Health Secretary) and the other by Angela Burns AM (Shadow Health) in which we have raised awareness and had a pledge board for AMs to sign.

- After the success of the above we have been able to maintain momentum and establish the first ever **Cross Party Group on Sepsis** in Wales. This met for the first time last month and was extremely well attended. The three major aims of this group are:
  1. An All Wales Treatment Pathway – to ensure all Health Boards in Wales treat sepsis in the same way
  2. Public Awareness of sepsis
  3. Support for families and those affected

- We have twice been able to meet with Health Secretary Vaughan Gething to discuss a way forward.

**Present Situation in Wales**

Having started later than England with our political campaign and having also had an election, we are slightly behind the curve in comparison with England in terms of the public awareness campaign. However, following a meeting with the Health Secretary last week (first week December 2016) and while, as expected, no formal commitment has been made, a meeting with Public Health Wales is being brokered. It is Public Health Wales who would run any campaign and we have made it clear that (a) UKST are committed to working with them on it and (b) this needs to be a campaign aimed at the whole demographic, not just targeted individuals.

What UKST has effectively done is brought the all the main players together, united and focused around sepsis: Welsh Assembly Government, Public Health Wales, NHS Wales and the public. This was reflected at the Cross Party Group meeting where all were represented.

**Other Initiatives in Wales**

- We have the Public Health Wales funded RRAILS (Rapid Response to Acute Illness Learning Set)/1000 Lives patient safety improvement programme which is responsible for introducing and implementing new programmes across the 7 health boards in Wales.

  - RRAILS also runs a steering group comprised of cross discipline reps from each HB and a patient rep.

  - RRAILS also runs quarterly training days where representatives of each HB meet to discuss, share and display good practice as well as receive presentations from external speakers.

  - NEWS Cards are imbedded across 7 health boards
We have posts for a Nursing Sepsis lead and a Medical Sepsis lead in some health boards (but of course would like this in all seven)
We have also had 2 published ‘Size of Sepsis in Wales’ studies supported by UKST and Cardiff University as well as NHS Wales. A third study has taken place this year and is awaiting publication.
http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0167230
NHS Wales has also won The Global Sepsis Alliance award for its work on sepsis.

What Scotland could do

1) Scottish Public Awareness Campaign on Sepsis – aimed at the whole population
2) Healthcare Professional Education – carry out a wide ranging awareness campaign with all healthcare professionals, including GPs, ambulance staff and Health Board staff to ensure that all healthcare professionals are aware of sepsis and think, ‘Could this be sepsis?’
3) Healthcare Professional Education – ensure that sepsis is included in all learning and education packages when healthcare professionals are in training
4) Ensure that NEWS is the embedded across the whole system in Scotland and used as a trigger to screen for sepsis, using the NICE NG51 endorsed Red Flag Sepsis prompts for urgent intervention using the similarly endorsed Sepsis Six treatment pathway

The UKST offer to the government in Scotland

UKST is committed to working in Scotland with equal diligence to that in England to ensure that heightened public and professional awareness work hand-in-hand with excellence in systems design to offer the very best care to patients of all ages unfortunate enough to develop sepsis.