The North Wales Bone Unit Fracture Liaison Service
(Secondary Care serving an urban community and large rural locality)
June 2016

Background
This Fracture Liaison Service (FLS) is a secondary care model established in 2006 and is based on the model established in Glasgow in 1999. The FLS is part of the North Wales Bone Unit and Osteoporosis Service, based at Llandudno General Hospital (Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board). The FLS serves the two main hospitals: Ysbyty Gwynedd in Bangor and Ysbyty Glan Clwyd in Bodelwyddan.

The catchment area covered includes Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire and Flintshire. The FLS cares for patients who come from very diverse communities, including some areas of deprivation in urban settlements (mainly around the coast) and an ageing population living in sparsely populated rural localities.

Current Practice
- The FLS is staffed by a team of Osteoporosis Specialist Nurses, Radiographers and administrative staff, supported by the Consultant in Metabolic Bone Disease; with Consultant Orthogeriatrician input for hip fracture inpatients and older inpatients.

- The service reflects best practice as described by the National Osteoporosis Society through involving patients, carers and specialists from many disciplines and backgrounds to provide a comprehensive service to all men and women aged 50 and above, who have suffered a fragility fracture. The pathway is easy to enter and easy to navigate from identification of the patient through to assessment of future risk and the provision of guidance, information and treatment for patients.

- Inpatients are identified with targeted case-finding by the FLS (who actively case-find all inpatients with fragility fracture by searching the hospitals admissions books). They endeavour to identify and see all patients during their in-patient stay – if patients are discharged prior to being seen then they are offered an outpatient appointment. Treatment is initiated on the ward when appropriate (e.g. if DXA scanning is not required) and other inpatients who require a DXA scan will be offered an outpatient appointment. Inpatients with hip fractures are seen by the FLS team and/or Orthogeriatrician.

- Outpatients are identified by targeted case-finding through the use of IT by the FLS; with access to information on all fracture clinics.

- The FLS operates “one-stop” clinics led by the Osteoporosis Specialist Nurses, held at the North Wales Bone Unit. This is particularly helpful for patients living in rural communities who
have long distances to travel to clinic. It is well recognised that healthcare for rural communities is often poorly coordinated.²

The ethos of the bone unit is to maintain a one stop service in order to optimise the delivery of efficient patient care that meets demographic needs. The collaborative nature of the bone unit promotes a good working relationship between primary and secondary care, which brings together the important theme of working more closely with the community of North Wales. This reflects the Betsi Cadwaladr University Local Health Board drive to deliver community based services across Wales (Setting the direction 2010³).

- Patients have their DXA scan undertaken by a radiographer on arrival at the one-stop clinic. They are then assessed by the FLS nurses (including blood investigations to exclude secondary causes of osteoporosis/fracture). ALL patients (including those found to have a normal bone mineral density) will be given tailored information by the nurses who explains the DXA scan result, discuss fracture risk and osteoporosis. This is supported with written information, discussion on any interventions required and answering questions. The nurses subsequently draft a DXA Scan report and recommendations for the GP (and this is electronically checked and signed off by the Consultant in Metabolic Bone Disease following clinic).

Outcomes and Impact
- The FLS sees 3,000 new patients per year and provides the core standards of the National Osteoporosis Society Effective Secondary Prevention of Fragility Fractures: Clinical Standards for Fracture Liaison Services.¹

- The service participated in a Peer Review of the Bone Unit by the National Osteoporosis Society in 2016 in order to develop services for patients.

- It is certified as meeting the Silver Level Criteria for the IOF Capture the Fracture programme (the only one in Wales).

References
