

Newsletter from the National Dementia Strategy Implementation Team

The National Dementia Strategy: Achievements to date and future potentials

March 2011

The National Dementia Strategy was published in February 2009 and is being widely implemented in care homes. Through monthly newsletters, the National Dementia Strategy Implementation Team is sharing ideas on how the strategy can be implemented, examples of how different homes have implemented the strategy, and resources to support care homes in their own implementation.

Over but not out !

This is the last newsletter in the care home series of the National Dementia Strategy implementation.

Over the last 12 months we have seen some excellent examples of good practice and opportunities for the sector to shine in leading a new generation of provision for people with dementia.

The agenda is not going away and dementia will remain a priority for the government and providers alike. As we embrace the demographic shift of our ageing population I believe the need for care provision in the sector will increase. The sector has to continue to strive to make its mark through sharing its excellence, stepping up to the mark and pioneering new ways of working. In the role I have held for a decade I have never ceased to be impressed with the people I have met and the work I have been privileged to see across care homes. The apparent simple interactions skilfully executed; the role models, leaders and care workers both nationally and, more importantly, locally, who have directly affected the lives of people living with dementia.

There is much to be proud of and I would like to see more sharing across the sector. Leadership and special interest forums can encourage and share excellence, give confidence to what is, and can be, achieved, and produce recognised pioneers for the dementia world both nationally and internationally.

Harnessing the passion to influence those who are struggling to make the changes will create a real force for change in the experience of people with dementia and their carers. We have a long road ahead but we have made a good start if we all play our part!

I hope that building on the best and harnessing the momentum for change will continue to inspire and progress the future of care homes and, most importantly, the people with dementia who live in them.

Deborah Sturdy, RN, MSc(Econ), Nurse Advisor Older People, Department of Health

Looking to the future: the National Dementia Declaration

The development of the National Dementia Strategy marked a watershed in how dementia was perceived in the health and social care system. For many years, dementia was not only ignored but, in some contexts, not even acknowledged.

For many people, the low status of older people's care was an excuse not to acknowledge the existence of dementia or indeed challenge the system in how it responded. With the development of the Strategy, dementia was raised up both the political and service delivery agendas. In addition, for the first time, there was a national recognition that this was a challenge for the health and social care system and there was a strategic and coherent approach to how the system rose to that challenge.

I was incredibly impressed with how quickly and coherently the strategy was adopted. The pace of change, whilst not as fast as many of us would like, was nevertheless significant and, from a point where dementias were ignored, there was now a clear vision for dementia services and a route map on how to deliver better care.

One of the areas that particularly impressed me about the strategy was that it understood that this was not just for acute and primary health services, but that if we were going to make an impact and improve the lives of people with dementia and their carers, we had to raise the issue right across the system and take awareness far beyond just health and social care.

The adverts that went out as part of the awareness raising programme were so impressive because they started to give people in every sphere of society an understanding of what dementia was about, but they also showed people who were living with dementia, coping with the changes in their cognitive function, but still living a good quality life. This was such a powerful message because it was counter to much of the prejudice that existed in society.

I think all those who were involved in developing the National Dementia Strategy can be very proud of what it achieved in such a short time and it has certainly laid the foundation for the next tranche of work in this area. In particular it has given us a platform on which to develop the Dementia Declaration.

The new government has come into power with a very different view about how you change systems and improve services. They have rejected the notion of centralised control and are more committed to decentralisation and localism. However, what they have not changed is the commitment to improving dementia care and delivering better quality of life for people with dementia and their carers.

In response to decentralisation and localism the organisations involved in the Dementia Strategy rose to the challenge of a new approach and have developed the Dementia Declaration. The Declaration is so powerful because it challenges organisations and individuals to identify their plan for better services and publish it so that it is open to scrutiny and challenge by the wider society.

I am confident that this approach is one that can deliver improved quality of life and better services for people with dementia, and the nature of the declaration means that it will go far beyond just health and social care systems.

In the future, the need for services and support for people with dementia will increase significantly, but I am confident that the Dementia Declaration will be the mechanism that delivers better lives for those people and their carers who are living with the condition.

Martin Green, Chief Executive, English Community Care Association and Department of Health Independent Sector Dementia Champion.

Decentralisation and localism in action: the Craegmoor Dementia Care Strategy

As the National Dementia Strategy has become increasingly embedded in the priorities of services offering ongoing care to people with dementia, individual organisations are developing their own dementia strategies.

Craegmoor's Dementia Care Strategy prioritises individuality, promoting wellbeing, engagement of people using the services, quality improvement and multidisciplinary working. The importance of working to the strengths of individuals has been a central premise in their approach and, within months of the National Strategy publication, Craegmoor appointed Debra Fox as Quality Development Advisor for Dementia.

Implemented within the Older People Division, the strategy aims to ensure that there is informed, consistent, good quality care being delivered to people living with dementia in Craegmoor homes.

The four objectives within the strategy are:

- establishing and maintaining a person centred model of care
- providing as supportive and enabling environments as possible
- creating a framework of engagement for everyone who uses the service, and
- training the staff group.

Craegmoor recognises that, for some care teams, the move towards delivering a person centred approach to care will require a culture change. This is not a process that can be achieved and maintained in the short term. Leadership, staff training, and developing environments that are safe, secure and enabling, are fundamental to the strategy implementation. Supporting people to tell the organisation what they think of the services is also a priority.

Craegmoor recognises that, in order to succeed, this approach requires commitment from all areas of the organisation.

Craegmoor can be found at: <http://www.craegmoor.co.uk/>

The Craegmoor Dementia Strategy will soon be available through the DH Dementia Portal (see below).

Essential in strategy delivery: The care homes workforce

The National Dementia Strategy set a framework for the future of staff development in health and social care settings. We need to ensure that future plans recognise that the staff who will be delivering much of that strategy in residential settings are among the poorest paid and potentially less valued of all those working in social care.

The strategy has emphasised the importance of a knowledgeable and competent workforce. This is dependent on the recognition that training requires resources, be those direct training, e-learning, replacement costs, or just providing staff with the time to talk about the challenges they face on a day-to-day basis and the ways those challenges might be effectively met.

In reviewing some of the projects that have already taken place, and some of the innovative practice that has been developed, it is already noticeable that there is a strong reliance on the skills of those working directly with those with dementia diagnoses and their families.

There is a need to recognise the value of this workforce and to recognise that much of the knowledge and skill development is part of an overall approach to ensuring that those working in social care settings are fully and properly equipped for the tasks we are asking them to undertake.

The success of the strategy in achieving its desired outcomes ultimately relies on social care staff being able to deliver what we ask of them. Through the provision of support, training opportunities and lobbying, the Social Care Association seeks to ensure that the contribution of those front line social care staff is recognised and valued.

Liz Taylor, Chair, Social Care Association. Web: www.socialcareassociation.co.uk

References, resources and links

Living well with dementia: a national dementia strategy is now at:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>

[+/www.dh.gov.uk/en/SocialCare/Deliveringadultsocialcare/Olderpeople/NationalDementiaStrategy/index.htm](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/SocialCare/Deliveringadultsocialcare/Olderpeople/NationalDementiaStrategy/index.htm)

Dementia Information Portal: Resources and Links: <http://www.dh.gov.uk/dementia>

National Dementia Declaration:

<http://www.dementiaaction.org.uk/>

http://www.dementiaaction.org.uk/info/3/national_dementia_declaration

http://alzheimers.org.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?documentID=1527

Quality Standard advice on Dementia from the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence Implementation Directorate Quality Standards Programme.

<http://www.nice.org.uk/aboutnice/qualitystandards/dementia/dementiaqualitystandard.jsp>

Social Care Association is a UK wide professional membership association for anyone who works in social care. SCA believes that the application of good practice in any setting happens finally between the person using services and the social care worker. SCA's purpose is supporting that person to practice well. SCA champions and represents the social care worker. Tel: 020 8949 5837. Web:

<http://www.socialcareassociation.co.uk/>

Dementia UK is a national charity, committed to improving quality of life for all people affected by dementia. The charity has four core areas: (1) **Admiral Nurses** are specialist mental health nurses who provide practical and emotional support to family carers of people with dementia. (2) **Admiral Nursing DIRECT** is a telephone and email helpline, provided by experienced Admiral Nurses. Tel:

0845 257 9406, email direct@dementiauk.org. (3) **Dementia UK Training** specialises in the provision

of high quality training courses for those who work with older people and people with dementia. (4)

Uniting Carers is a national network of carers, former carers, family and friends of people affected by dementia. Web: <http://www.dementiauk.org/>

My Home Life is a collaborative programme aimed at improving the quality of life of those who are living, dying, visiting and working in care homes for older people. Working in partnership with the care home sector, My Home Life is undertaking a range of educational activities to assist everyone in this field to share best practice and enhance quality of care.

<http://www.myhomelifemovement.org/>

This will be the last issue in this series of newsletters from the Department of Health
National Dementia Strategy Implementation Team.

Sincere thanks to all who have supported and contributed to the newsletters.

From our feedback, we know that these newsletters have offered ideas to care home staff, managers, representative organisations, carers and relatives of people who live with dementia in care homes.

Ultimately we hope that they have positively influenced the care offered to people who live with a dementia in care homes.

Special thanks to :

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Julienne Meyer for My Home Life

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