
Dementia Improvement Group

The Dementia Improvement Group met again at Taunton Racecourse on 10th September. There was another good turnout of enthusiastic and committed stakeholders, despite the weather being fantastic. Thank you to everyone who made arrangements to attend.

- Development of intergenerational dementia projects with local schools;
- Better prescribing, both in terms of patient access to acetylcholinesterase inhibitor medication and reduced use of antipsychotic medication;
- Improved diagnosis rates, closing the gap on the national target and overtaking other regions in the process.

CCG Successes 5 years on

Nick Cartmell had asked CCG dementia commissioners and clinical leads prior to the DIG meeting what they felt had been their main successes over the past 5 years.

All CCGs cited improvements to, or introduction of, commissioned community support services for people and carers after diagnosis. This recognises that the South West has been keen to ensure people benefit from a diagnosis as much as possible.

Other notable achievements include:

- Greater focus on primary care engagement with dementia;
- Improved access to and outcomes for Memory Assessment Services (some of the shortest waits to assessment & diagnosis in the UK);

Advance care planning

Gina King from NHS Gloucestershire (and now seconded to the SW SCN to disseminate her work regionally) spoke enthusiastically and passionately about how NHS Gloucestershire has developed and implemented better quality advance care planning in the CCG. The resources developed have already been adopted by a number of other CCGs in England in particular NHS South Devon & Torbay, NHS NEW Devon and NHS Kernow in the South West.

The resources are centred on a patient-held advance care planning booklet.

More advance care planning

Emily Madsen, specialist palliative care social worker from Rowcroft Hospice in Torquay, continued the care planning focus with a presentation about a new service promoting advance care planning with people recently diagnosed with dementia and their carers. The service is jointly delivered by Rowcroft and Devon Partnership Trust.

Resistance to advance care planning early in the dementia journey is generally expressed by professionals rather than service users, and despite some doubts about the group format of sessions they have been very well received.

Often professionals find starting conversations about advance care planning hard, and Emily advised that it was important to upskill all professionals including Dementia Advisers and social care employees rather than expecting GPs to initiate conversations all the time.



Emily recommended a resource from America called Go Wish cards which can be used in a variety of settings including

ITU where communication by the patient may be limited.

Primary Care Dementia Practitioners

Julie Anderson and Sandra Easterbrook from NHS Kernow CCG gave an interesting presentation about a new service in Cornwall in the community to support primary care with dementia identification and support.

The concept began in 2010-11 as a way of mitigating against a significant rise in dementia prevalence predicted by 2020. Funds were identified from the Prime Minister's Challenge Fund and savings from an inpatient dementia unit. Recruiting suitable Practitioners proved straightforward and there are currently 15 in post across the county. Practitioners come from mental health, social work psychology and general nursing backgrounds, are band 5 and receive specific training on appointment including in end of life care.

Each Primary Care Dementia Practitioner is attached to 3 or 4 General Practice Surgeries, the number varying according to QOF dementia register size to ensure equitable workloads. They help people with dementia and their carers & families to navigate the dementia journey and work closely with primary care staff being based within Surgeries. In particular they carry out an annual physical health check on all people with dementia on the GP QOF register and are the first port of call for any problems, so far reducing referrals into other mainstream community and mental health services by 254.

effect against future cognitive loss (some might say it's already started!).



Dementia Risk Reduction

Nick Cartmell highlighted a new dementia risk reduction booklet for the public produced by a collaboration of organisations led by Public Health England and Alzheimer's Research UK. Hard copies were distributed and a PDF version can be found here:

<http://www.alzheimersresearchuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/RRD-0515-0517-Risk-Reduction-Low-Res.pdf>

(or go to www.alzheimersresearchuk.org and click *About dementia* then *Helpful Information* then *Reducing the risk*)

SCN Lead for Dementia

Nick Cartmell announced his intention to stand down from his clinical lead role for dementia at the SCN. He cited the increasing demands of his young family (see *below*) and difficulty balancing GP work with dementia work as reasons for his decision. Nick would like to thank everyone involved with the Dementia Improvement Group for their passion and enthusiasm for improving regional resources for people with dementia and their families over the past 5 years while he has had one form of leadership role or another in this field.

Justine Faulkner, Network Manager, presented Nick with a bottle of fizz and made a short speech about Nick which caught him rather off guard by its kindness. The fizz will be consumed in moderation in the hope of providing some protective

Membership

The Dementia Improvement Group welcomes stakeholders from the following sectors:

- primary care, particularly CCG leads
- specialist older person's mental health services
- older person's acute care social care commissioners
- voluntary sector providers
- representatives of the needs and views of people with dementia and their carers and families
- carers
- research networks
- post-graduate medical education
- Strategic Health Authority
- public health
- National Institute for Creative Ageing.

The main quality expected of Group members is the possession of great enthusiasm for improving anything which relates to dementia in the South West (see map). This might be through one of the "three Ps": Power (being able to implement

change), Pounds (having access to resources to support change) or Passion (enthusing others to embrace change).

Contacts

For up to date information about the work of the Dementia Network please go to www.swscn.org.uk or www.dementiapartnerships.org.uk.

To publicise any examples of positive practice in the South West, or to offer feedback on any technical or accuracy aspects of the content of this website please send an email to rowan@dementiapartnerships.org.uk.

To discuss any aspects of the work of the SCN and DIG, please contact our network manager Justine Faulkner at justine.faulkner@nhs.net.

The next generation of dementia fighters?!

