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age UK
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Age UK's Dementia Friendly Programme

Helping local Age UKs to become dementia friendly

A summary of the evaluation





The Dementia Friendly Programme supported local Age UKs to become more dementia friendly; expert support was provided to help local Ages UKs to review the accessibility of their services for people living with dementia.

Since 2013, 46 local Age UKs in England have been supported to help shape their services to be more inclusive for older people living with dementia.

The support provided focused on the following five domains:

- **The voice of people with dementia** – listening to and engaging with people with dementia as a starting point.
- **The place** – assessing the accessibility of the internal and external environment for people with dementia.
- **The people** – awareness raising for staff, volunteers and trustees.
- **Network** – collaborative working with local and regional partners.
- **Resources** – effectively using internal resources and gaining ‘buy-in’ from all.

What were the successes of the programme?

- ✓ **New approaches** to working with people with dementia have been adopted, and to **the design and delivery** of services.
- ✓ **Cultural changes** are taking place with **increased awareness** of dementia amongst Age UK staff and volunteers.
- ✓ Local Age UKs **gained new information** and identified **new learning**, relating to **best practice**.
- ✓ Local Age UKs **disseminate learning to their network**, and joined their local dementia **action alliance**.
- ✓ **Organisational audits and action plans** are a useful and effective tool to **achieve change**, especially when allowed to evolve and be used in a flexible way.

What were the challenges?

- Generating enthusiasm for change from colleagues and volunteers.
- Unwillingness of older people to include older people living with dementia in their activities.
- Lack of engagement from some external organisations.
- Time and financial resources required to make identified changes.

Local Age UK feedback:

'If you are involved in the services it is hard to have a dispassionate look, so it's always a good thing to have someone from outside to see if there is anything we have missed.'

'We used to have a risk averse attitude to delivering services, but we are now looking at making sure we are not closing down opportunities for people with dementia... the team have made commitments to take forward gardening activities, organising a summer day out, walks, and looking to develop 'men in sheds', working with a local dementia association.'

'Staff are braver about delivering sessions to people with dementia, they now feel more confident and try to make sessions more fun and engaging, they wouldn't have been as confident without the training.'

'The most important thing I've learnt: if you want extra advice, go to someone with dementia.'

'I now focus more on improving the person's quality of life rather than focusing on the incompetence. People with dementia have high rates of depression, so I'm trying to help improve mood by doing things they want to do. I did not previously look at it from this perspective.'

'We used the plan in executive meetings and in conversations before a Dementia Action Alliance meeting. We are also using it in discussions with the council. The plan has been used as a basis for bigger things.'

'Having that bit of extra knowledge and training really helped. We took some residents to the seaside to have fish and chips. One lady started crying as she hadn't done anything like this for so long, and had been stuck within four walls. So the training inspired us to do something a bit different.'



The information for this pamphlet was sourced from the document, *Age UK's Dementia Friendly Programme – Evaluation Report*, which is authored by Erika Kispter, Sarah Alden and Andrea Wigfield.

The authors are based at CIRCLE (Centre for International Research on Care, Labour and Equalities) at the University of Leeds. The evaluation report was completed in July 2015.

For more information please visit:

www.ageuk.org.uk/health-wellbeing/fit-as-a-fiddle/dementia-friendly-programme

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