

## Executive Summary

The Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust (RD&E) serves a population of more than 400,000 people and employs around 7000 staff. As a result of demographic pressures, the Trust has cared for increasing numbers of frail older people with a cognitive impairment due to a dementia, delirium or a combination of the two over the last few years. In response, the Trust established a Dementia and Delirium Steering Group to provide clinical leadership to improve and develop practice in delivering compassionate care to these patients and their families/carers. The group is multidisciplinary and involves a number of partner organisations. They identified a number of key priorities to make significant step changes in how the Trust provided compassionate care to this group of patients. These included:

- **Education and training:** Ensuring that all staff are equipped with the knowledge, skills and confidence to provide compassionate care for patients with dementia and their families was seen as a key priority. The Group established a Dementia and Delirium Awareness programme to promote awareness and understanding. This programme, which is mandatory for all staff, seeks to ensure that attendees understand what it might be like to have dementia and be dependent on others to maintain their dignity and support their basic needs. Over 6,000 of the RD&E's staff have attended this programme to date and feedback from the courses has been overwhelmingly positive. Staff of all levels are finding them informative, thought-provoking and are empowered to make a difference for patients living with dementia. In ward areas, Group members work closely with the multidisciplinary teams including security staff, to innovate and facilitate safe, effective, person-centred care for these patients and their families.
- **Forget me not campaign:** We introduced the Forget Me Not campaign to improve communication with patients who have any form of confusion. Forget Me Not aims to benefit anyone struggling to communicate their needs and preferences, for whatever reason. The campaign symbol, a Forget Me Not flower, tells staff that the patient needs a little more time, sensitivity and skill to support their journey through services.
- **Information on dementia and delirium:** To enable patients, carers and staff to have better information about dementia and delirium, we developed a series of leaflets:
  - Standards of care for people with dementia while in hospital
  - Eating and Drinking for Patients in the Later Stages of Dementia
  - Information on dementia and delirium in hospital
- **"This is Me":** "This is Me" is a patient-held document to support individuals in an unfamiliar place. Patients and their carers' are encouraged to fill in the booklet with the patient's history, background and interests so that Trust staff can get to know the person and enable more individualised, person-centred compassionate care.
- **Confusion, Delirium and Dementia Care Plan & Delirium Guidelines:** This care plan and associated guidance helps staff caring for patients with dementia or a delirium ensure that care is in line with best practice.
- **Dementia Champions:** We have established dementia champions – staff who are local experts who can advise and support other staff and patients on dementia issues – in all areas/Departments.
- **Diagnosis:** Early diagnosis of dementia through the use of the Find, Assess, Investigate, Refer (FAIR) assessment. Compliance with the FAIR assessment has increased from 65.15% in September 2013 to 93.2% in June 2014. This has been achieved through leadership and engagement with a wide range of staff. Weekly feedback of ward performance has empowered teams to deliver better care as a result.
- **Nutrition and Hydration:** The Trust purchased tables and chairs to set up within bays. Frail, older patients including those with dementia now enjoy eating meals round them which has enabled really positive social interaction and significantly improved nutrition and hydration. The Steering Group also led the implementation of continual provision of snacks and finger foods for patients on these wards. Feedback from patients and families has been really positive. The Group plan an audit to determine

the effectiveness of these interventions.

- **Environment:** Considerable attention has been paid to ensuring that the environment of care for patients with dementia is welcoming, orientating and dementia-friendly. Wards that care for large numbers of older people now have orientation boards, improved signage to toilets and bathrooms, dementia clocks and activities. We are nearing completion of the 'Devon Garden' which has been designed to provide a therapeutic outside space for patients with dementia and their families. Features include a traditional red telephone box with an innovatory sound system playing stories from and about Exeter, music and songs from every year from 1930 to 1980, raised beds for patients to garden, a cabinet of scents and seats engraved with key stories from different decades. The corridor spaces to the garden have also been enhanced by a timeline of popular images to prompt interest and discussion.

- **Patient and carer involvement:** Feedback is continually sought from patients, carers and staff through our 'What went well .....even better if' cards. These are routinely distributed and findings are shared at all levels. A monthly survey of carers' of patients with dementia is undertaken by Trust governors and results are analysed by the Steering Group monthly and reviewed by the Board twice yearly. Where incidents or complaints show that we have got it wrong for patients and their families, we strive to learn from these events and share our learning in an honest and transparent way.

- **Dementia Awareness:** Members of the Steering Group led a series of events for National Dementia Awareness week. Patients attended a celebration of life with music and poetry, patients, carers and staff shared their memories of the seasons and the time of their life for a series of Memory Walls. These are being turned into permanent works of art to be displayed within the hospital.

Through its leadership, vision, drive, relentless focus and commitment, the Dementia and Delirium Steering Group is transforming the culture at the RD&E and ensuring that compassionate and patient-centred care is found at every level of the organisation.