

Dementia Strategy

Lead Officer: Dr Alex Murray

Author: Victoria Wright, Mental Health Commissioning Manager

Contact Details: Victoria.wright19@nhs.net

Division and Local Member: All

1. Summary

- 1.1. The current Somerset Dementia Strategy is under review as the previous strategy expired. A rewrite of the current strategy is planned which will be presented to the September Older People's Mental Health and Dementia Collaborative Service Development Group.

A small working group is currently being set up to identify the immediate priorities to improve the support and diagnosis of patients in Somerset suffering from Dementia.

- 1.2. To address Somerset's challenges, we will:
- Continue to focus on prevention and early intervention.
 - Work across health and care to promote people's independence and reduce unnecessary demand on services.

2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations

- 2.1. Issues have been identified with the current viability of the Somerset Memory Assessment Service due to a lack of Consultant Geriatricians; currently the service is at 34% vacancy rate. A meeting is set to take place in April 2018 to look at remodelling of the service to ensure that capacity is maintained across the Healthcare economy in Somerset.
- 2.2. Diagnosis rates of dementia in the population of Somerset are still below national required rate. A paper was presented to the Clinical Executive Committee at Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group on 8 March and it was agreed that an action plan will be devised to outline the resources and actions needed to ensure that Somerset reaches the national diagnosis rate.

Somerset has older than average population and so the incidence of dementia is likely to be higher. In the county there appears to be increasing demand on many services in relation to dementia, including primary care, A&E, acute wards and nursing and residential care homes admissions. Earlier intervention with higher quality community based support will help reduce some of these pressures on services – and improve the quality of life for those who have dementia and their carers.

3. Background

- 3.1. Dementia is a growing challenge. As the population ages and people live for longer, it has become one of the most important health and care issues facing the world. In England it is estimated that around 676,000 people have dementia.

In the whole of the UK, the number of people with dementia is estimated at 850,000.

Dementia mainly affects older people, and after the age of 65, the likelihood of developing dementia roughly doubles every five years. However, for some people dementia can develop earlier, presenting different issues for the person concerned, their carer and their family.

There are around 540,000 carers of people with dementia in England. It is estimated that one in three people will care for a person with dementia in their lifetime. Half of them are employed and it's thought that some 66,000 people have already cut their working hours to care for a family member, whilst 50,000 people have left work altogether.

There is a considerable economic cost associated with the disease estimated at £23 billion a year, which is predicted to triple by 2040. This is more than the cost of cancer, heart disease and stroke.

Somerset County Council have carried out significant work during 2018/19 on community respite solutions and support for people with memory loss or dementia through the day service transformation project. The Adult and Health Commissioning Team are currently administrating the allocation and development of the Community Dementia Development Grant which is already showing positive results in terms of new and improved community based provision, which is being led and shaped by communities. This work will be continuing into 2019/20. Also, a new model for complex dementia needs without utilising 1:1 is being trailed – 'a family model'. More work is required on best practice and evidence of good outcomes but there is growing evidence that prohibitive 1:1 care exacerbates behaviours and different models of care can better manage them and improve outcomes.

3.2. Dementia is a key priority for both NHS England and the Government. In February 2015 the Prime Minister launched his [Challenge on Dementia 2020](#), which set out to build on the achievements of the Prime Minister's Challenge on Dementia 2012-2015. It sets out NHS England's aim that by 2020 we are:

- the best country in the world for dementia care and support for individuals with dementia, their carers and families to live; and
- the best place in the world to undertake research into dementia and other neurodegenerative diseases.

Some of the key aspirations of this vision are:

- Equal access to diagnosis for everyone
- GPs playing a lead role in ensuring coordination and continuity of care for people with dementia
- Every person diagnosed with dementia having meaningful care following their diagnosis
- All NHS staff having received training on dementia appropriate to their role.

One of the 10 priorities identified by NHS England as part of the [Five Year](#)

[Forward View](#) is to upgrade the quality of care and access to mental health and dementia services.

4. Consultations undertaken

- 4.1. Consultations on the emerging Dementia Strategy have taken place as part of the Fit for My Future plan which is jointly held with Somerset County Council and Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group.

5. Implications

- 5.1. If patients are not receiving the appropriate diagnosis this can significantly impact on the support available to them and their families/carers. Diagnosis also enables patients to remain in their own homes as long as possible with their families which are better for the patient.

If diagnosis is not made, then long term this can mean that they are subject to inappropriate prolonged admissions to acute beds which would not be required if the appropriate plans are in place. This is not beneficial to the patient and is a huge cost implication to the health and social care economy.