

# Dementia

## Information for staff

A recent report highlights that people with dementia over 65 years of age are currently using up to one quarter of hospital beds at any one time. We know that most hospital staff will come across people with dementia at some point during their work and that staff want information about dementia.

It is important for hospital staff to understand dementia, how it affects people and how best to support and communicate with this patient group. It is a complex subject. The purpose of this guide is to provide basic information and point you in the direction of where you can find out more.

### Dementia: Some basic facts

Dementia is an age related condition. The older you are the more likely you are to have dementia. 1 in 16 of people over 65 have dementia, and 1 in 4 over 85. A quarter of hospital patients are estimated to have dementia. 42% of people over 70 who have an unplanned admission to acute hospital have dementia. Rising to almost 50% in those aged over 80 years.

The experience of people with dementia in hospital is often not a good one.

### More about dementia

The term 'dementia' is used to describe the symptoms that occur when the brain is affected by specific diseases and conditions, such as Alzheimer's disease. Dementia is the result of increasing organic damage to the brain. Over time it can progress from a mild to severe condition. Dementia affects people in different ways, depending upon the area of brain affected and a person's personality, background and physical health.

### Most people with dementia will experience:

- loss of short term, recent memory;
- problems in perception and understanding ;
- problems in expressing themselves.

### Some people with dementia may also experience:

- hallucinations;
- problems in controlling bodily functions (e.g. in standing, continence);
- finding it hard to sequence once familiar activities.

Dementia can result in people becoming reliant on long term memory, causing them to relate to the present as if it was the past. This leads to miscuing and misunderstanding.

### For example they may perceive:

- an ambulance clinician in a uniform as an enemy soldier from the war;
- a shiny surface as water;
- attempts to lift them as an assault;
- strangers as long-lost relatives.

Imagine what it must be like to be so confused, when the world isn't making sense, people around you are not responding in the way you expect and you cannot find the words to explain yourself. People with dementia naturally respond by becoming very anxious, withdrawn, frustrated or angry.

It is hard to tell if someone has dementia. Currently only one in three people receive a diagnosis. If any of the symptoms or responses mentioned above arise, consider dementia as a possible reason.

### Butterfly Scheme

The Butterfly Scheme is an opt-in scheme for people with memory impairment. They may have a dementia diagnosis, a delirium or perhaps simply seem to have some confusion. If you feel one of the patients in your care might benefit, please offer the scheme to the patient's family or carer. If there's a carer available to support the person in opting in, they will be involved, otherwise you can involve a colleague in the opt-in decision acting in the best interest of the person with dementia.

For more information please see the Trust dementia website: <http://nww.cht.nhs.uk/home/dementia/>

### Top tips

- When approaching someone with dementia it is important to try and put yourself into their shoes.
- Find out about the person's background, where they are from, their interests and work history. These can help with communication and in building trust. Make sure that you use the person's preferred name. The 'See Who I Am' document will help to capture this information.
- Minimise background stimulation and noise.
- Recognise that difficult behaviour is often only a means of communicating anxiety confusion and distress. Try to understand the cause.
- Pay close observation to non-verbal communication especially facial expressions and gestures. Careful observation can provide valuable insight into people's needs.
- When talking to a person with dementia keep your sentences short. Give the person time to absorb what you're saying and be patient when they reply.
- When a person with dementia believes that they are right, acknowledge their Welcome, support and involve relatives and carers. In this Trust we have signed up to John's Campaign which welcomes relatives and carers to stay with patients with dementia.
- Be alert to problems in hospital which might prevent a person with dementia from eating and drinking well.

- Keep the environment around the person as simple and uncluttered as possible. Ensure facilities are clearly signposted and easy to access.
- Remember every contact with a person with dementia is a golden opportunity to provide comfort or make their day. A smile or squeeze of a hand goes a long way.
- Consider the Mental Capacity Act and the best interest test.

## Where to find out more

The Trust dementia intranet site provides a range of learning and development resources in dementia care: <http://nww.cht.nhs.uk/home/dementia/>

### Alzheimer's Society

Huddersfield Office

Tel: 01484 429865

Calderdale Office.

Tel: 01422 352789

Calderdale and Huddersfield

Email: [c&k.service@alzheimers.org](mailto:c&k.service@alzheimers.org).

### Making Space

Tel: 01484 483083

Email: [enquiries@makingspace.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@makingspace.co.uk)

### Gateway to Care

Calderdale 01422 393000

Huddersfield 01484 414933

## If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :

Nurse Consultant for Older People  
Huddersfield Royal Infirmary

Telephone No: 01484 355819

[www.cht.nhs.uk](http://www.cht.nhs.uk)

## If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.

Potřebujete-li tyto informace v jiném formátu nebo jazyce, obraťte se prosím na výše uvedené oddělení

Jeżeli są Państwo zainteresowani otrzymaniem tych informacji w innym formacie lub wersji językowej, prosimy skontaktować się z nami, korzystając z ww. danych kontaktowych

ਬ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੇਰ ਪ੍ਰਾਚਾਰ ਜਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور فارمیٹ کی زبان میں درکار ہوں، تو برائے مہربانی مندرجہ بالا شعبے میں ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

"إذا احتجت الحصول على هذه المعلومة بشكل مغاير أو مترجمة إلى لغة مختلفة فيرجى منك الاتصال بالقسم المذكور أعلاه"