



**Working together to
improve dementia
services in Wiltshire**

September 2019



Memory Shed, Corsham.

Photo courtesy of Alzheimer’s Support

Front cover image: Music for the Mind, Seend.

Photo courtesy of Diane Vose / Alzheimer’s Support

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Introduction

Healthwatch Wiltshire made dementia one of its priority areas because local people told us that this was important to them. Over the last four years we have been talking to people with dementia and their carers and have gathered over 1,600 views and experiences about different aspects of dementia*.

This report shows how we have used the views and experiences that have been shared with us. It describes how organisations have worked together to improve dementia services in Wiltshire and the impact of this for people living with dementia and their carers.

*Some of this work was carried out under Healthwatch Wiltshire's previous provider, Evolving Communities.



Chippenham Memory Café.



Dementia training

In 2015 when we first asked local people for their views about dementia services, you told us that the quality of care homes and domiciliary care agencies was varied and that you thought that management and training contributed a lot to the quality of care for people living with dementia (Healthwatch Wiltshire Dementia Engagement Report 1 2015).

You told us that you thought dementia training was most important for care homes to be able to provide good quality care for people with dementia with complex needs (Healthwatch Wiltshire Dementia Complex Needs Report 2017).

Your views were then shared with the Dementia Delivery Board, where Wiltshire's dementia services are planned and monitored, and with providers of dementia services and organisations that support them.

The findings of the Healthwatch Wiltshire reports were consistent with concerns from care home managers and the finding of local research into the training needs of managers and care staff (Partners in Care Research Report 2016).

This was taken forward by organisations who support the adult care workforce in Wiltshire. The findings of Healthwatch's Wiltshire reports were used to support a bid to secure national funding for training and this was successful. Several individuals and organisations worked together to identify and provide specialist dementia training providers from Stirling University.

The training for care managers was organised and coordinated by Wiltshire Care Partnership and Wiltshire and Swindon Care Skills Partnership, with 111 care managers or senior staff members from 71 different care providers attending the training courses.



Working together to identify and provide specialist training

- Lead Officer at Wiltshire Workforce Action group
 - Dementia Commissioner at Wiltshire Council
 - Wiltshire and Swindon Care Skills Partnership
 - Wiltshire Care Partnership
 - Sustainability and Transformation Partnership for BANES, Swindon and Wiltshire.
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Impacts of training

Care Provider One – A specialist dementia care home

Key changes

- Care plans changed to be more user friendly
- Environment is now more dementia friendly
- Meal time routines have changed
- Increased staff knowledge leading to greater understanding and confidence.

Impacts

1. Supper was previously served at a set time in the dining room. It could sometimes feel a little rushed and the home identified that it was a time when some residents could become agitated or distressed. Following the training, the home decided to change the routine. They now serve a buffet style supper. This means that residents can come and go and choose what they want to eat. The atmosphere for residents and staff is now more relaxed. Residents are now much more content during this time of day and are eating better.
2. A resident who needed supplements was very reluctant to take them and would often refuse them. Staff started to serve them in a sherry glass – they are now happy to take them because the wine glass has positive associations for the resident.
3. A resident was taking large doses of medication, sleeping a lot, and experiencing a low quality of life. Staff worked with the Care Home Liaison Service to review and reduce the medication (Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust). The person is now getting up, is going out more and is more active and sociable.
4. Basic Spanish phrases have been included in the care plan of a resident with Spanish as a first language and who speaks more Spanish as her dementia progresses, so the staff can speak to her in Spanish.

The Lead Trainer was very inspirational and knowledgeable on the subject. The opportunity to share practice and learning from other providers was a really useful aspect of the training.

The training has been cascaded to the whole team through one-to-one and supervision, new staff receive one-to-one support, job shadowing and buddying.

Care Provider Two - A provider of residential, nursing and domiciliary care, including specialist dementia care

Key changes

- Increased use of positive language in care plans
- Environmental changes to increase light and colour contrast
- Staff are more confident to 'think outside the box'
- Redesign of a new home based on information provided at the training
- Introduced "Resident of the week" scheme to share information and increase knowledge about residents' lives.

Impacts

1. The home changed the language they use to describe residents' behaviour. It is now described from their perspective. This meant that behaviour that previously may have been described as 'challenging' would now be described as 'distressed'. This has affected how staff care for people, interaction is much more personal, staff are more accepting and see things from the person's point of view and can deal with situations in a calmer way.
2. The main hall of one home had dark wood panelling. This was painted white, enhanced lighting has been installed above doors and bulb wattage has been increased. This has made the area much lighter and this helps people with dementia see more clearly and make sense of where they are. These changes have led to a decrease in the number of falls.
3. A new resident moving from another home was said to be very challenging. Staff recognised that this behaviour was due to the person's need to be occupied. They support the resident to clean, iron, and water the plants, ensuring they are kept stimulated and occupied. If the resident becomes unsettled staff realise "it's because we haven't given him something to do" and can rectify this.
4. A gentleman got very agitated when being supported with personal care and, in particular, was very reluctant to brush their teeth. Several different approaches had been tried but were unsuccessful. A care worker had an idea to model the behaviour. They bought their own toothbrush and toothpaste and started brushing their teeth. The gentleman now 'mirrors' the care worker and they brush their teeth together. They no longer get agitated or stressed and their personal care has improved.

The training was inspirational and made you realise what you are doing and why, it has brought the passion out in the staff teams and has enthused staff to make further developments.

The training made all the staff not get too complacent, it was led by someone working in the field and researching all the time.



Community groups

You told us that you thought specialist services in Wiltshire for people living with dementia were high quality but that you were not always able to access them (Healthwatch Wiltshire Dementia Engagement Report 1 2015). This included specialist dementia groups and day centres.

We shared your views with people who plan and provide dementia services in Wiltshire and said that it didn't seem that there was equality of dementia community services in Wiltshire.

Following this, Alzheimer's Support asked us to carry out a detailed analysis of dementia groups as they had recently been awarded the contract to provide dementia community services (Healthwatch Wiltshire Analysis of Dementia Community Support Services report 2017).

We identified areas of Wiltshire where there was a lack of groups, the types of groups that were wanted and what people valued most about community groups. You asked for more groups in certain locations, such as North Wiltshire and Mere, and told us that you would like to see a variety of types of groups which offered opportunities to socialise.

Key changes

- New groups were established in particular parts of Wiltshire
- A greater variety of groups was provided
- New day club in Warminster was opened
- Groups were provided in villages covering rural areas
- Greater links developed with existing community services, e.g. Men's Sheds.

Impacts

There are now more groups available for people living with dementia and their carers in parts of Wiltshire where people felt these were needed. These have included:

- Gardening groups in Malmesbury
- Art Group in Lyneham
- Memory Café in Mere
- Day Club and Art Group in Warminster
- Memory Café in East Grafton.

There is a greater variety of groups reflecting what people told us they wanted. These include:

- Wildlife and outdoor groups near Salisbury and Trowbridge
- Gardening groups in Trowbridge, Malmesbury and Wilton
- Discussion group in Devizes
- Memory Shed in Corsham.
- The Memorables peer support group in Salisbury.



Supporting dementia groups in Wiltshire

Organisations that support dementia groups across Wiltshire include:

- Alzheimer's Support
 - Alzheimer's Society
 - Wiltshire Service Users Network, and
 - a variety of dementia friendly initiatives.
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There are more groups for carers of people living with dementia to share experiences and be supported. These have included groups in Melksham, Royal Wootton Bassett and Tidworth.

People living with dementia and their carers have told us about the wide-ranging benefits of these groups.

1. Improvements in mental and physical health and an increased sense of wellbeing:



2. Support to be independent and more involved in their local communities:



3. Being able to access support and information at the groups:



Our impact

Healthwatch Wiltshire are really pleased to see that commissioners and providers of dementia services have listened to the views of local people and used these to influence how services are planned and provided.

We feel that working in partnership with other organisation has strengthened our ability to gather people's views and use this to improve dementia services in Wiltshire.

Here are all the organisations that we have worked with to bring this about:



From the engagement work that formed the basis of the Wiltshire Dementia Strategy, to this latest impact report, Healthwatch Wiltshire have been an integral partner in shaping and developing dementia services in Wiltshire. Key achievements can be directly related to comments raised by the public during Healthwatch Wiltshire's Dementia Engagement work and subsequent published reports.

— Sara Young, Joint Commissioner — Dementia, Wiltshire Council



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