

Yorkshire and the Humber Clinical Networks

Dementia and Older People's Mental Health Bulletin January 2021

Happy New Year! And welcome to our first e-bulletin of 2021 which we hope will be a happier year for all of us! These e-bulletins aim to bring you the latest news and information about dementia and older people's mental health. If you have any content that you would like included, please let us know. Please also forward to any networks and colleagues who may be interested.

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Dementia and Older People's Mental Health Update

Focus on Delirium

Think Delirium during COVID

Rod Kersh, our Network clinical advisor, emphasizes the importance of remembering to Think Delirium during the pandemic:

Since the arrival of COVID-19 at the start of 2020, we have learned much about its spread, we have developed tools for treatment and support of patients and most recently, the vaccine has arrived.

COVID is a terrible disease that tends to have its greatest effects on those already affected by other long-term conditions such as diabetes, asthma and cancer. It is also strongly associated with delirium – not only being more devastating in its effects in older people and particularly those living with frailty and dementia but also because it is increasingly recognised as a secondary killer.

The COVID virus affects many systems through a patient's body, with the most lethal being the associated pneumonia or pneumonitis. Many patients who die of COVID do not have pneumonia, however. Instead, the associated delirium leads to worsening confusion, disorientation and particularly fatigue. It is this exhaustion which, particularly in care home residents, leads to an insidious course of dehydration and increasing weakness from inadequate fluid and dietary intake.

In hospitals almost all patients who have COVID-19 are treated with intravenous fluids; this is almost impossible within care home settings and even the use of lesser but sometimes effective subcutaneous fluids are not available. For many very frail care home residents a decision is made early in their illness with COVID to take a palliative approach and avoid the potential trauma of repeated physiological assessments, blood tests or transfer to hospital with all that entails.

How best to support those living with frailty and / or dementia who develop delirium? The principles are outlined in our [resources](#) – focus on adequate hydration; offer frequent drinks and food; allow people who are exhausted to obtain adequate rest; review medicines, stopping sedatives or diuretics which may be making things worse; and offer reassurance and support (to patients and relatives).

Infection with COVID-19 in an older person is often life threatening. By taking some simple supportive steps, more people will be able to survive and recover.

NEW THINK DELIRIUM resources

Colleagues from the Clinical Network and West Yorkshire and Harrogate Health and Care Partnership have worked together to produce a set of [THINK DELIRIUM resources](#).

These have been designed to raise awareness of delirium across health and care settings and include posters, leaflets, prompt cards and business cards, all available in [this link in PDF format](#) for download, printing and distribution as needed.

We are keen to hear feedback from carers in particular about the THINK DELIRIUM leaflet and would welcome comments and suggestions, please e-mail ENGLAND.YHSCN@nhs.net.

A '[Raising Awareness of Delirium](#)' e-Learning module has been developed and is free to access for all on Health Education England's e-learning for health portal.

[Four delirium dramas](#) have been filmed. These are four scenarios showing people experiencing delirium in different settings - acute hospital, care home and in sheltered housing. They are designed for use by skilled educators to use in delirium awareness sessions.

Useful tips on the COVID-19 vaccine for people with dementia

This [short FAQs document](#) developed by the Royal College of Psychiatrists, working with Dementia UK, includes useful tips for giving the vaccine without causing distress and how to explain the vaccination to someone who is living with dementia.

COVID-19 and Dementia

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a devastating and disproportionate effect on people living with a dementia and their carers. There are two key areas where we can take action now:

- Prioritising and supporting those with dementia to receive the vaccine
- Utilise care planning to keep people out of hospital

Colleagues from the NHS South East Clinical Delivery and Networks dementia team have collated relevant information, hints and tips which can be found here: <https://www.southeastclinicalnetworks.nhs.uk/gp-covid-19-dementia/>.

Memory Service Assessments: A New Way of Working

An updated version of [Memory Service Assessments: A New Way of Working](#) is now available, outlining best practice in delivering safe, person-centred care using a blended model of assessment and diagnosis.

National lockdown restrictions have affected Memory Service waiting times and services have been adapting to provide safe care during the pandemic, embracing alternative approaches to assessing patients. These include phone and video consultations, providing virtual occupational therapy and neuropsychological testing and changing thresholds for investigations like brain scans.

Treating Well and Antipsychotic Prescribing

[Antipsychotic prescribing rates](#) for people with dementia appear to be rising again to a similar level seen during the first lockdown. Factors such as behaviour change during lockdown periods or stocking up on medication might be contributing factors.

NICE guidance provides key considerations for prescribing antipsychotic medication for people living with dementia and central to this is an overview of the risks and benefits of this course of action. For further detail please see:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/advice/ktt7/chapter/Key-points>.

The Treating Well element of the [Dementia Wellbeing in the Covid-19 guidance](#) also sets out key priorities for personalised and holistic care in managing the behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia, with the emphasis on non-pharmacological approaches. There are also resources and tools highlighted to assist with this. Also see the findings of the WHELD study highlighted [below](#), this [Guardian article](#) about using everyday objects to improve quality of life for people with dementia and information about a free e-learning package from University of Hull [below](#).

Dementia diagnosis rates

The estimated diagnosis rate for people with dementia in North East and Yorkshire was **64.6%** at the end of December 2020. This is higher than the current national average of **62.4%** but below the national ambition of **66.7%**. **The regional rate has reduced from 71.5% at the end of January 2020.**

Monthly rates at CCG level, STP level and numbers on GP practice dementia registers are available [here](#). NHS Digital has also produced a supplementary [report](#) outlining changes impacting the rate of dementia diagnosis.

tide – focus on Young Onset Dementia

This week, tide's twitter account @tide_carers, is dedicated to Young Onset Dementia to highlight the findings from their recent [survey of carers](#). Key findings include:

- Lack of recognition by others of their status as carers
- Lengthy waits for diagnosis
- More information was needed at the point of diagnosis
- Lack of post-diagnostic support
- Impact on relationships (80% of respondents were caring for their partner)

Visiting Care Homes during COVID-19 guidance

The [national guidance](#) on Visiting Care homes during COVID-19 was updated on 12th January to reflect current arrangements for the latest national lockdown.

Conversations about COVID

Our fortnightly Conversations about COVID sessions provide staff and paid carers from across Y&H the chance to share their experiences of supporting people affected by dementia and frailty during COVID. These are informal 1-hour meetings, focused on a particular topic and beginning with a short 20-minute presentation.

Our next Conversation is on **Thursday 11th February, 11-12**. The provisional topic for this meeting is supporting physical activity for older people during COVID. Further information will be circulated shortly.

News and Resources

Brain Health: A new way to think about dementia risk reduction

Alzheimer's Research UK has recently launched a Brain Health policy report ([Brain Health: A new way to think about dementia risk reduction](#)), which underpins a broader new public awareness campaign called [Think Brain Health](#).

Up to 40% of dementia cases worldwide could be prevented or delayed, yet there is still limited understanding of the potential to reduce the risk of developing dementia. The [report](#) details the findings of a joint investigation with the Royal Society for Public Health to look at the potential for reframing the risk reduction conversation around brain health. There is considerable public appetite to engage with the positive potential of looking after our brains. 69% of UK adults believe they can influence their brain health whereas only 34% believe they can reduce their risk of developing dementia. The term 'brain health' resonates with people of all ages and is a stronger driver of positive behaviour than dementia risk reduction.

If you would be interested in joining a roundtable event to discuss brain health or have any comments, contact policy@alzheimersresearchuk.org.

Music for Dementia

Music for Dementia has launched a colourful new [website](#) including advice on:

- how music helps
- resources to help you make music a part of dementia care
- real stories of music making a difference
- the latest information about the campaign.

Embedding music into personalised care plans

Music for dementia has joined forces with DHSC to co-produce [two guides](#) for Social Workers on how to embed music into personalised care plans for people living with dementia.

The [full-length guide](#) covers the benefits of a musical approach for people living with dementia and how to include it in strengths-based assessments, including the role of link workers, family and friends in making this happen. The [one-page short guide](#) is a colourful summary of the information, intended as a quick reference resource. Both guides are supported by the Dementia Choices Action Alliance (DCAN) and NHS England.

tide sessions for Carers

tide (together in dementia everyday) are running a range of sessions and support groups for carers, including focus groups for carers of people with young onset dementia and sessions on Living Grief and Bereavement and You Can't Pour from an Empty Cup – register here: <https://www.tide.uk.net/tide-events/>. This [case study](#) highlights the benefits that carers of people with dementia feel when connecting with other carers.

tide are also advertising for a number of [vacancies](#).

IAPT and mental health in older people

Winter can often be a lonely time for our elderly population and we want them to know the NHS can help support their mental health. Alongside the NHS, Age UK are trying to break down any barriers relating to age and raise awareness of talking therapies, like the IAPT programme. Research shows that older people who are aware of these therapies believe they would be helpful for patients of any age, whose mental health issues are having a negative impact on their day-to-day life. Age UK are encouraging older people to start the conversation about their mental health, so they can get the help they need. Please see [here](#) for more information.

NEW: Library of Images

The Centre for Ageing Better has launched a [new library of images](#) which depict older people in non-stereotypical ways. All the images are available for download and free to use by any organisation or individual.

Report on the impact of alcohol use

The harmful impact of alcohol use in older adults has been highlighted in a [new report](#). The report shows that the burden of alcohol harm falls disproportionately on those from more disadvantaged areas, worsening existing inequalities, and that older people from BAME backgrounds are more likely to face challenges in accessing treatment.

Other findings indicate that people in mid to later life are:

- More vulnerable to alcohol harm as the body's ability to breakdown alcohol decreases as we age
- More likely to drink heavily due to changing life circumstances e.g. retirement, change in financial circumstances, bereavement and fewer opportunities to socialise
- More likely to go undetected as they are 'generally not known to treatment services and often reluctant to engage following hospital discharge'

Campaign for better specialist dementia support

To coincide with publication of the report, [Only together: towards better specialist dementia support](#), Dementia UK is campaigning for people affected by dementia to receive the information and specialist support they need, when they need it. The [campaign](#) focuses on two key recommendations:

- Information should be tailored to individuals' needs in terms of quantity, detail and timing for when it is given
- Families affected by dementia should have a clinically trained professional as their single point of contact

Film: Dementia Communication across Language Boundaries

This 30-minute [animated film](#), highlights the need to develop 'language awareness' when communicating across language boundaries. It flags the potential impact of dementia on people's use of language, how to manage difficulties with words, phrases and sentences and ideas for making communication work as well as it can when there are language barriers.

There are more videos in the 'Dementia communication and help for carers and people with dementia' series [here](#).

Adult oral health in care homes: toolkit

Public Health England and stakeholders have produced a [toolkit](#) to support care homes and commissioners to implement the [NICE guideline \(NG48\): Oral health](#)

for [adults in care homes](#). The toolkit contains useful links for care home staff, residents, their families and friends to support good oral health and reduce oral health inequalities.

Wandering the Wards: An Ethnography of Hospital Care and its Consequences for People Living with Dementia

Featherstone and Northcott provide a detailed and unflinching ethnographic examination of everyday life within the contemporary hospital, focusing on the everyday care of the largest patient group, people living with dementia. The Kindle edition of this new publication highlighting the experiences of people who are admitted to acute hospital is available for free download on [Amazon](#).

Intercultural Dementia Care

This [guide](#) from Alzheimer Europe encourages health and social care workers to:

- provide culturally appropriate and understandable information about dementia and existing services and support
- make sure that people understand that dementia is a medical condition
- explore the kind of support that would be helpful
- develop new approaches that reflect the needs and wishes of people from different ethnic communities
- develop cultural awareness, sensitivity and competence through an ongoing process of learning and exchange with people from minority ethnic groups.

NEW Dementia Creatives website

DEEP have launched their new [‘Dementia Creatives’ website](#). These pages celebrate the many ways in which people with dementia tell a story about who they are, where they have been, and where they are going. Dementia doesn't necessarily curb the desire to be creative. On the contrary, many people begin to explore new forms of expression after their diagnosis. Many others maintain or rekindle old skills. It feels good. It brings people together. And they learn from it and from each other.

Supporting you to make decisions while caring for someone living with dementia during Coronavirus (COVID19) and beyond

This [decision aid](#) is for **you** as a family member or friend **caring for someone** living with dementia who may not **have** the capacity or ability to **make** their own **decisions**. They may live with **you** at home, in their own home or in a **care** home.

Research and Innovation

Focus on Care Homes

Supporting Care Home Residents Living with Dementia and Hearing Loss and the Impacts of COVID-19 on Current Practice

Many care home residents are living with both hearing loss and dementia which often impair their communication abilities, social engagement and can exacerbate dementia-related symptoms when left untreated. There is therefore a need to understand and optimise current practices relating to hearing loss support. Researchers at University of Manchester are keen to understand whether COVID-19 restrictions in care homes have affected audiology practices and worsened cognitive-communicative impairments for residents.

Care home staff are invited to share their experiences in providing hearing loss support for residents with dementia via this short [anonymous online survey](#). Participants will be reimbursed for their time with a high street voucher.

WHELD programme for people with dementia helps care home staff deliver person-centred care

An evidence-based programme for care home residents living with dementia improved their quality of life and reduced agitation and other symptoms of dementia. A [major study](#) across the UK found that the Well-being and Health for People Living with Dementia (WHELD) programme was effective and cost less to deliver than usual care. The programme reduced agitation and the overall burden of neuropsychiatric symptoms such as depression or aggression. A reduction in the number of hospital and GP visits made the approach less expensive to deliver than usual care. The [WHELD programme](#) supports care home staff to deliver patient-centred interventions for residents with dementia. It seeks to reduce reliance on antipsychotic drugs and uses social interaction, personalised activities and exercise to improve care.

Survey on improving medicine optimisation in care homes

Residents living in care homes often take multiple medications. However there appear to be lots of differences in the way that medicines optimisation is delivered across the UK. If you are you a doctor, nurse, pharmacist, pharmacy technician, care home manager or care home assistant and are involved in supporting medication management in UK care homes, then please consider taking part in this [short survey](#) which will take 10-15 minutes to complete. Your response will be anonymous. The aim of the survey is to gather feedback on a framework which we hope will help to standardise practice and improve medicines optimisation for residents living in UK care homes. Contact [Rosie Dunn](#) for further info.

Care home residents on multiple medications have an increased risk of falling

Falls among residents in UK care homes are commonplace. This [study](#) found that residents taking multiple medicines had an increased risk of falling. Risk was also increased with a regular prescription for antidepressants or benzodiazepines (sedative drugs). Two-thirds of residents in the study were living with dementia. Researchers suggest care homes should emphasise non-drug approaches e.g. massage, music or art therapies. These could help residents with depression and common symptoms of dementia such as agitation or sleep disturbance.

Dementia Care Mapping: Care home managers and staff need more support to improve care

Dementia Care Mapping (DCM), aims to improve practices in care homes for people living with dementia by asking staff to put themselves in the place of residents, through watching and assessing residents' experiences. The observations are fed back to the staff team who work together to develop action plans to improve care.

A previous study found that DCM did not lead to improvements in homes. This follow-up [study](#) explores why. It finds that implementation is patchy and vulnerable to issues such as: staff and manager turnover; staff lack confidence or skills to lead changes in practice; and inadequate staffing and funds. The [report](#) suggests that how well managers understand, value and engage with DCM has a key influence, as does their leadership style.

Peer Support and Peer Support Workers in Older People's Mental Health

This [paper](#) from the Centre for Mental Health explores some of the factors which need to be considered when establishing mental health peer support services for older people. Developing peer support services is a key aspect of Community Mental Health Transformation work.

Retirement or no retirement? - The decision's effects on cognitive functioning, well-being, and quality of life

This [study](#), carried out in the first quarter of 2020, finds further evidence of the benefits to older people of remaining professionally active after retirement age. Those who do so retain better cognitive ability, in terms of attention, memory and problem-solving ability, as well as greater levels of life satisfaction.

Dementia prevention, intervention, and care: 2020 report of the Lancet Commission

There is growing evidence for the existence of nine potentially modifiable risk factors for dementia: less education, hypertension, hearing impairment, smoking, obesity, depression, physical inactivity, diabetes, and low social contact. This [paper](#) highlights three more risk factors for dementia: excessive alcohol consumption, traumatic brain injury, and air pollution.

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on hospital care for people with dementia

The National Audit of Dementia collected [feedback](#) between June and July 2020 to find out how the pandemic had affected hospital care for people with dementia.

Rule of thumb: end of life care for people with dementia

This [guide](#) is for any healthcare professional providing care and support for people with dementia at the end of life. It can be used for training, to support decision-making and to help discussions with family members and advocates.

Informal dementia carers had to make difficult decisions about paid care during COVID-19

This [paper](#) shows how the first nationwide COVID-19 lockdown affected unpaid carers, and how they made decisions about accessing paid care. Many unpaid carers made the difficult decision to stop paid carers coming into the home during lockdown. As a result, they had more work to do and had to take on care jobs they were not trained for. This [research](#) brings to the fore longstanding problems with care for people living with dementia, including lack of continuity of paid care, poor monitoring of care staff entering homes, and minimal support for unpaid carers.

Information from our localities

NEW Leeds Dementia Strategy

Leeds has published its [strategy document](#), "Living with Dementia in Leeds – our strategy 2020-25". There is strong local commitment to developing Leeds as a dementia-friendly place, and to improving local services for people with dementia. This has underpinned improvements in recent years including timely dementia diagnosis, support to live with the condition and support for carers.

Joint working is well-established through Leeds Dementia Partnership and its forums and task groups. The Partnership, working alongside people affected by dementia, has supported the development of the [strategy](#) which describes thirteen

'building blocks' to making Leeds the best city to live in with dementia. The [strategy](#) includes six commissioning priorities, where focused work and/or investment are required to improve services, and where there are opportunities to make the most difference. People with dementia and carers have been particularly affected by the COVID crisis, and service 'reset and recovery' is included among these priorities. The [strategy](#) also covers the different stages of dementia and the diversity of people living with the condition. You can view the Plan on a Page version [here](#).

Leeds Older People's Forum - Time to Shine

Time to Shine aims to reduce social isolation and loneliness amongst older people in Leeds. The team have created a [webpage](#) to share learning resources relating to this work. New resources focused on co-production will be made available on this page in due course.

Eating and Drinking Well with Dementia

Colleagues in Sheffield have collated [resources and advice](#) to support people with dementia to eat and drink well.

Training opportunities in Sheffield

There are some great new [training opportunities](#) for anybody who works or volunteers to support people living with dementia and their carers in Sheffield. Sessions include: Dementia and Delirium, What if a person with dementia doesn't eat and Supporting people living with dementia in the transition after COVID.

Education and Training Opportunities

Foundations in Dementia

This free online course runs for 6 weeks, starting on 1st February. Aimed at professionals and family supporters, it gives participants the opportunity to gain expert knowledge and skills to care for individuals living with dementia. You will explore signs and symptoms, interventions, support networks and more. Spanning six topics from prevention and diagnosis to end of life care, the course also offers insights from recent research.

Register at: www.futurelearn.com/courses/dementia-awareness-training

Coping with 'challenging behaviours' in Dementia

This [free e-learning course](#) will assist practitioners to:

- Detect the causes of 'behaviours that challenge' caregivers
- Make rational decisions on individualised unmet health and psychosocial needs
- Offer personalised health and psychosocial 'behaviour' support plans
- Recognise what care home staff and family carers may need to manage health and psychosocial 'behaviour support plans' - and when to seek additional professional expertise

You can complete the course at your own pace and a CPD certificate will be available on completion. Access this e-learning on the University of Hull's brand new [dementia website](#) by clicking [here](#). You will need to register for an account. You can also check out other useful resources on the University of Hull's dementia website, such as the Challenging Behaviour Scale (CBS) and training animations - <https://dementiahull.co.uk/toolkits.html>.

In other news...

The Alzheimer's Society has launched its [Dementia Hero Awards 2021](#). The awards will recognise the inspirational achievements of those who care for people with dementia, those finding innovative solutions in research, and the campaigners and media fighting for the rights of people with dementia.

The deadline for nominations is **Friday 5 March 2021**.

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