

## Practice Dementia Champions

This role has been included in the HITS since April 16 to enable the ambition for Barnsley Primary Care to be Dementia friendly in a meaningful way. To achieve the HITS in 16/17 Practices had to nominate an in-house Champion, this role in many cases is not clinical, and all Practice staff had to have Dementia Friends' training. Some of this training was delivered at a launch event for this role held on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2016. It aimed to raise awareness of how Dementia affects the lives of those who have the diagnosis but also the impact upon their carers and families. Attenders included representatives from all sectors of Primary Care including GP Staff, Pharmacies, Opticians and Dentists.

In fulfilling the 16/17 HITS Practices had identified their Dementia Champion, it was therefore an appropriate follow-on to build upon that role in the current year's HITS. The requirements set-out in this year's HITS may appear modest for Dementia Champions, but the potential of having this role to bring about significant service improvement for people with Dementia should not be underestimated. Facets of this role include:-

- **Gaining Awareness** – training in how dementia affects individuals is essential to understand how to deliver services optimally. Learning how people respond to particular environments or how everyday actions might be interpreted by a person with dementia is necessary if we want to understand their perspective and improve our service offer. All Practice Staff need to know how to avoid potential distress for people with dementia (PwD) - the Dementia Friends training advises how to do this, thereby minimising the potential for distress and improving confidence for staff
- **Maintaining Registers of People with Dementia** - these exist in every Practice's clinical system, we know who the current people are, it is important that these registers are maintained and reconciled against the register information held by the Memory Team at SWYFT, therefore the quarterly registers circulated by Michelle Hinchliffe to every practice should be checked and returned promptly to ensure the health system knows exactly where people are. It is important to inform the Memory Team of the death of any patient on the dementia register for obvious reasons
- **Developing Registers of Carers for People with Dementia** - the added value of having an in-house Champion is that they can connect to the carers of PwD and help them to feel more supported. For example, by obtaining their contact details, information about local events, Memory Cafes, get-togethers can easily be disseminated out to them, enabling them to access a social activity they may enjoy. There is a wealth of activities and support groups within Barnsley, but not before have we had an established route by which to send this out. We now use the Dementia email distribution list to share information about events (BarnsleyCCG.DLDementialeads@nhs.uk). This is a **social prescribing** concept, helping prevent PwD and their carers from becoming more isolated, feeling unsupported leading to declining morale
- **Networking to learn what is out there** – since being part of the Dementia Friendly development, we have learned much about the work of the Dementia Strategy Group (chaired by Shiv Burton, BMBC em: ShivBurton@barnsley.gov.uk) and the Dementia Action Alliance (chaired by Christine Key, em: ChristineKey@yahoo.co.uk). Through these bodies

organisations: local Alzheimer Society; local businesses; Making Spaces; BIADS; health and public sector partners; carers; come together to share information, develop plans and discuss ideas of how to achieve a Dementia friendly status for Barnsley. Knowledge of what these organisations offer enables many support services to be more widely taken up, and good practice can be introduced across all sectors, such as the **Herbert Protocol**.

- **Many practices have joined the Alliance** giving rise to the development Practice-level dementia service improvement plans. BHNFT have shared their staff information packs and have through Vicky Faxon-Wastnage have rolled out many dementia-friendly ideas, these have been shared with Practice Dementia Champions to encourage more of the same.
- **Environment** - We know from training how the physical environment can affect the experience for PwD, therefore use of colour and other considerations before undertaking any practice building improvements can help avoid getting it wrong from the perspective of PwD
- **Individual support** – Practice Champions are learning about the role of the Memory Team Advisors and Memory Team Nurses. Champions can make contact with their registered PwD or Carers to introduce themselves and explain their role, and offer to act as recipient for any non-medical problems which they could then relate to their lined Memory Team Advisor and get them to contact or visit the patient. This proactive behaviour should make individuals feel they have support in place for when things are difficult, and if well-effected would undoubtedly be professionally rewarding for the Practice Champions

On 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2017, we brought the Practice Champions together to hear what had been achieved so far, and to encourage continuation of these positive activities. It was an informative session. We heard how Champions had used opportunity such as flu clinics to introduce dementia friendly working, applied to the Mayor's bursary to set up Memory Clubs and put up displays in waiting spaces. We also initiated networking of ideas across the Practice Champions, this facilitated by our CCG Officer lead: Lynne Richard (lynnericahrd@s@nhs.net)

In my view the Practice Champions are discovering what their role can enable and whilst Practice Managers are supportive of delivering the HITS, we should create an important component of the Practice Team. I hope your attendance at this session today encourages you to consider your role within the Practice and how you can support your Champion to optimise their role.

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**17<sup>th</sup> May 2017**