

Central Bedfordshire Local Authority

Enhancing quality of life through activity

Central Bedfordshire Local Authority delivered a QCF Award in activity provision to care providers. This project took a blended approach to delivering training, offering both an e-learning course and a series of workshops. The training aimed to ensure that care was more person centred, and to raise awareness of dementia.

Background

Central Bedfordshire is a Local Authority, serving a population of just over a quarter of a million people. The local population is ageing, and a key priority for the Council is to improve and secure high quality residential dementia care. Evidence suggests that activity provision is central to promoting physical and mental wellbeing in care homes. Linked to this, the Council also has priorities around providing person-centred care, as close to home as possible, including through developing dementia-friendly communities. This project brings together these two themes; dementia awareness and activity provision.

The Council had previously looked at providing activity provision training, but wanted to develop something with longevity beyond the end of the project. They had also recently subscribed to the

e-learning website log on to care – and thought this might be a good way of combining activity provision training, with the development of a sustainable, e-learning module.

What we wanted to achieve

The project is aiming to improve the quality of care for people with dementia, by ensuring all care provided is person-centred, and conducted with dignity and respect. There is well-established evidence that activity provision can lead to improvements in quality of life, building self-respect and self-worth.

The Council also hoped that the programme would be beneficial for staff; as well as enhancing their skills, confidence and competencies, it would also increase their job satisfaction, by encouraging them to use new skills in the workplace. For providers, the programme would help them evidence quality of care to the CQC. The programme aimed to work with a wide range of both care homes and Personal Assistants (PAs), 'we wanted to offer this out as wide as possible.'

The workshops were built around four objectives:

- Understanding the importance of recognising people who need care and supports' past lives
- Developing skills to be able to facilitate activities
- Combining understanding of dementia awareness with activity provision;
- Developing the confidence and contribution of staff.

What we did

The project worked with a range of partners to deliver a QCF award in activity provision. The partners included Vivalo, who delivered the activity provision programme, and supported the e-learning module development; Oaklands College, who delivered the QCF Award, and the Grey Matter Group, who wrote the e-learning module.

Training used a blended learning approach to deliver training to care providers. Potential beneficiaries first had to undertake a dementia awareness e-learning course on Log onto Care (a website for people who work in Adult Social Care in the Thames Valley and Chilterns region). This project then developed the activity provision as an additional module. They also developed a workbook to support the Award in Activity provision. This bridged the gap between the taught sessions and any Award requirements - particularly the need to evidence knowledge.

The training itself consisted of 15 hours of workshops. It was intended to be at a very basic level, to provide a starting point to get people to think about what they're doing, and to plan ideas. It included signposting on to further development opportunities for staff; so the training provided links to publications developed by the College of Occupational Therapists around delivering activities. The project was delivered on time and on budget.

What we achieved

There were a number of positive outcomes for beneficiaries. For those new to activity provision they built a number of new skills. It also increased their job satisfaction, allowing them to use their personal skills – for example poetry, or music – in the workplace. For those who were already experienced activity providers, the training 'was a confirmation of what they already did, which was reassuring'.

Beneficiaries reported that the trainers were very effective, and that they engaged well with the training. They also reported that they gained greatly from the sessions; in particular, they noted that they gained practical skills which they intended to take back and use in the workplace. Though this has not been evaluated yet (it is too

early) the Council intends to return and evaluate three months after the end of training. It is hoped that, at this stage, as well as evidence of activities being implemented in homes, there will be notable improvements in the quality of care and residents' experience.

The project was successful in engaging a wide range of organisations, including those not known to the Local Authority; 'we had good representation from both the private and the voluntary sector'. Parts of the project have been sustained. The training provision and e-learning remains, but the Local Authority is no longer providing the QCF award, due to budgetary constraints. The e-learning is now available to around seven more local authorities, free of charge, through their subscription to Log onto Care.

What we learnt

The evaluation showed that respondents had mixed views on how useful the e-learning was. Some felt that it was worthwhile, and others that it was too basic. As expected, it was the more skilled and knowledgeable staff who found it less worthwhile. In future, projects might want to consider whether to target the training more narrowly on less experienced staff.

The timescales were quite tight for the project. To develop training from scratch, market it and deliver it in one year was very challenging. Achieving this required good planning, right from the start. The project struggled to engage PAs. They wrote to all Direct Payment recipients in the area to let them know that free training was available for their PAs – they had some interest, but found that, there was reluctance to engage in some necessary administration tasks related to the project. The project was run by four partners – this was central to its success as no one partner would have been able to deliver this on their own. However, this may also have thrown up organisational challenges. All four partners met together at the start of the project to discuss implementation and this was key to avoiding any difficulties. They also had a project manager involved in setting up the plan, the team felt this was important as it ensured everyone knew their roles and responsibilities 'there was an element of accountability'.

For more information please contact

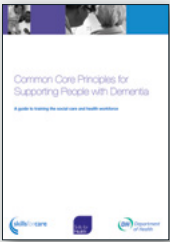
Claire Gregory

Claire.Gregory@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Skills for Care Recommends

From activity provision and dementia qualifications to associated guidance, Skills for Care produces various resources to strengthen care worker skills and enable better care provision.

Common core principles for supporting people with dementia



We have produced a guide which supports the social care and health workforce to care for people with dementia.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/dementia

Guide to qualifications in adult social care

We have developed a Level 2 and 3 qualifications in both Dementia Care and Activity Provision, as well as ensuring there is a Dementia pathway as part of the Diplomas in Health and Social Care.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/qualifications

Funding

For adult social care employers in England, our funding can help towards the cost of learning and development for activity provision and dementia care.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/funding

Skills for Care
West Gate
6 Grace Street
Leeds
LS1 2RP
telephone 0113 245 1716
email info@skillsforcare.org.uk
web www.skillsforcare.org.uk

[@skillsforcare](https://twitter.com/skillsforcare) 

www.facebook.com/skillsforcare 

www.youtube.com/skillsforcare 

www.linkedin.com/company/skills-for-care 