

London Borough of Havering

Dementia Awareness and Dementia Champion Project

Local authority integrates housing and social care training to help people with dementia stay longer in their homes

The London Borough of Havering is a large local authority employing more than 4000 staff. The services within the Children, Adults and Housing Directorate collectively support, and deliver services to, the community for vulnerable adults, children, and families in need - supporting those who cannot support themselves.

Across the directorate there was one Dementia Liaison Officer with subject matter expertise.

Havering has the largest growing ageing population in London. Many residents in Havering living with dementia enter the care system earlier than necessary because of the following key factors:

- a lack of awareness amongst housing and adult social care staff of third sector and community support available for people
- a lack of coordinated working between adults social care teams and housing teams
- housing teams contacting adult social care at crisis point for the individual
- social care teams coming up with quick-fix costly solutions rather than working jointly with individuals on a preventative approach
- currently there are few services for people to purchase with their personal budgets; working with people on their support priorities will assist the market shaping that commissioners are trying to achieve
- families and carers often have little or no understanding of dementia, nor of their rights under the Care Act, the local authority and

community help available to them, nor even of the terminology which support workers use.

What we wanted to achieve

The project brought together staff from across Housing and Adult Social Care services to develop their understanding and knowledge of dementia, and to help people with dementia to live well and be supported within their own home for longer. The aim was to help Havering residents sustain and maintain their tenancies, thus avoiding entering emergency or residential care.

The specific goals were to develop and deliver three holistic training courses to cover five topics: dementia awareness and behaviour that challenges; assistive technology; person-centred support planning; third sector and community support; joint working and the prevention agenda. The courses were targeted to three different audiences: families and carers, frontline staff and to a new group of 'dementia champions'.

The idea was for housing and social work teams to be more aware of other forms of community support for residents, for social care teams to work alongside housing colleagues to develop strength-based interventions and for adult social care commissioners to enhance their awareness of which community services could be commissioned to support people effectively.

The team of dementia champions would be the 'go to' people within the organisation when any staff member from housing or care and support

had any questions, queries or require support in the area of dementia. The introduction of a tenancy sustainability tool aimed to provide early indicators of needs, which could be addressed promptly. The project aimed to build additional capacity in dementia expertise across the organisation and to support Havering's dementia expert.

What we did

The project was led by the Learning and Development Manager, and the Dementia Liaison Officer for Havering. The training strategy focussed on the three groups:

Frontline staff within Housing and Adult Social Care (ASC) Services

This was a half-day session covering dementia awareness, challenging behaviours, assistive technology and person-centred approaches. The course explored the benefits of social care teams working alongside housing colleagues to develop strength-based interventions with residents. The course was designed to enable staff who carry out care needs assessments to take an asset-based approach, and focus on the skills, abilities and support networks of the person who needs care.

A lot of quality information was provided that I was not aware of. This will enable me to support my wife for longer at home.

Participant, Family and Carer Session

Learners were asked to bring at least one case study each to the session to allow them to focus on, and engage in, a real work activity to put their learning into context and impact on practice. Learners had the opportunity to work with others from diverse backgrounds in order for them to gain a greater understanding of the impact different roles had on an individual being supported.

During the session learners worked together to produce a positive risk assessment, and used an asset-based approach to produce a care needs assessment. At the end of the session, each

learner produced a personal action plan to use with their teams and managers.

Dementia 'Champions' (across Housing and Adult Social Care Services)

The five-day course covered the Level 3 Award in Awareness of Dementia, and training on network-building, stakeholder engagement, and evaluating feedback to inform service improvements and future provision. The champions were asked to bring at least one case study to bring real world context to the learning. They completed four written assignments to achieve the qualification.

In addition, learners were trained in organising, facilitating and evaluating focus groups so people across Havering and their family members had opportunities to express how they felt about the support they currently received, and what they would like to receive like from Havering in terms of support and communications and how they would like to receive this.

The champions also developed tenancy sustainability checklists for use across the organisation.

Family and carers of people with dementia

This three-hour session was designed to give families and carers of individuals with dementia knowledge of the services and support networks available to them and to support them to access them confidently. It also covered some understanding of dementia and challenging behaviours, and the importance of documenting and positive using life-story work.

The impact of each programme was measured and evaluated. The learning outcomes for each session were identified, and people's knowledge was assessed before and after each course.

By working with both housing and social care on the same training course has proved to be effective in sharing the information that is available that both sectors are not aware of.

Chelsea Potts, staff member

What we achieved

The project successfully delivered three programmes of training to 75 frontline staff and 24 family members and carers. The staff developed their knowledge and understanding of the topic, were informed of support available for carers and people who need care and support, and had the opportunity to discuss ways in which services can work in a more integrated way going forward.

The carer workshops helped people to understand dementia and its effects, and gain awareness of support within the community. They also provided a feedback platform for carers to voice their issues and concerns.

The champions achieved the qualification, giving them confidence to undertake future activities and initiatives beyond the project scope. Packs for each group were created, incorporating local support information and advice from various organisations, a staff desktop guide and a Carers Top Ten Tips to extend the learning. The champions were given a resource and contacts list to own and update as part of their responsibilities. The resources will support on-going communication between agencies and ensure that relevant up-to-date tools and information are circulated within the services and community.

The staff training initiative bridged relationships between housing and social care and a formal management meeting is now regularly attended to ensure that the integration across housing and social care continues.

The 'Tenancy Sustainability Tool' produced by the Dementia Champions group and was embedded into frontline and community services. This new way of working helps people who need care and support, and their carers, identify how people with dementia can be supported at home. The information gathered is used by housing services staff and frontline workers to recognise people's support needs and trigger conversations with social care staff at a much earlier stage.

Becoming a Champion takes my social worker role to a different level. I am looking forward to continuing in this role beyond the programme.

Katrina Cook, Champion

What we learnt

The impact evaluations were key to understanding what had worked well and what could be improved. All groups agreed that housing and care had not been working together enough and for the first time they fully realised the negative impact that this was having on people's lives. There was a misunderstanding from the housing teams that once a person had a diagnosis of dementia then their accommodation was no longer right for them; staff had expected that the diagnosis should signal the person's move into a residential service. There was an existing HR policy for dementia in place within Havering of which none of the delegates had any awareness. Staff didn't know that Havering worked with the fire brigade, nor that there was a hoarding policy in place and a process for raising an alert when there were hoarding concerns. It was clear that there needed to be improved communication across the borough with regards to the policies and information available as well as how to work with these policies. GPs, health services and frontline community services would all greatly benefit from this model.

Family members and carers are a huge resource that can be better supported and utilised more. Identifying carers as early as possible, and training staff to inform, signpost and support them helps people with dementia to remain in their own homes for longer.

The buy-in from strategic management played a critical part in the success of the programme, ensuring frontline staff had the opportunity to attend and that the champions across housing and social care were given support beyond the project time scope.

For more information please visit:

www.havering.gov.uk

**Project lead: Emma Masters,
Project Lead.**

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. Employers should use the principles as part of their development plans to improve the experience of those with dementia and their carers.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Documents/Topics/Dementia/Common-core-principles-for-dementia.pdf

Dementia and other conditions

This series of case studies highlight how to care for people with dementia and other conditions, including Parkinson's disease, sensory impairment, learning disabilities and long term pain management.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Documents/Topics/Dementia/Dementia-and-other-conditions.pdf

Further Dementia Resources

These include how to identify dementia, how homecare workers can support people, with dementia, diversity and dementia and free e-learning.

www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Topics/Dementia/Dementia.aspx

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