



LOTHIAN DEMENTIA PROJECT

Facing Dementia Together: Post Diagnostic Support

April 2009 Report

April has been a particularly busy month for the project including a large number of meetings, briefings and public engagement exercises.

The printed version of the report of the Murrayfield Convention was made available (to view an electronic copy please visit www.dementia.stir.ac.uk or to request a hard copy please contact jemma.galbraith@stir.ac.uk)

A key event was a public lecture for almost 100 staff, students and members of the public on improving dementia care with a particular emphasis on post diagnostic support delivered at Edinburgh Napier University.

June Andrews facilitated a half day session with key influencers in Lothian including the NHS Board members and associated local authority elected representatives and Alzheimer Scotland. On this day, a prioritisation exercise took place to start to rank the wide range of change ideas proposed by Lothian staff. A further exercise will take place on 25th June during the Lothian good practice conference at DSDC.

There was a briefing for Professor John Starr to discuss the relationship between the Lothian dementia project and the research network for dementia of which Professor Starr is the lead. The network is funded by the Chief Scientists office and has been in place since August 2008 to improve the quantity and quality of dementia related research in Scotland. It will work to improve the research training of NHS staff in this field, and set up a resource which is a register of people with dementia and their carers who would be willing to consider being part of a research programme. It is hoped that this will help with attracting research funding into Scotland. Details of the network can be found on www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2008/08/29081256

John McMahon, lead chaplain of the Royal Edinburgh Hospital met to discuss the relationship between spirituality in dementia care and the provision of opportunities for religious observance, in particular for older patients with dementia. For example, a person with dementia may gain comfort from hymns and prayers they remember from childhood, and staff are able to provide access to this. Even if staff themselves are required take a secular view of their health care provision, there is clear clinical benefit from this religious observance, and it is a human right for patients to have their access to this facilitated. A useful website is www.faithinolderpeople.org.uk

Colin Anderson, Midlothian Director of Social Work met with June Andrews to explain the strategic direction of the council's work in dementia. There will be a further opportunity to hear about the programme in May.

Wendy Paterson the network coordinator for the Scottish Social Services Learning Network South East and John Kerr the team leader for practice learning visited the DSDC at Stirling to examine learning materials for their staff groups and hear about the project.

The Lothian Project was discussed in a BBC Radio Scotland interview about life story work involving an Edinburgh care home resident. More information at www.caringmemories.net

For further information, please contact june.andrews@stir.ac.uk, or jemma.galbraith@stir.ac.uk

June Andrews
April 30th 2009