



Dementia: A guide for care home managers and providers

Improving quality of care given to people with dementia in care homes is a key national and regional priority. Although there are some excellent care homes there are also some concerns.

Supporting and caring for people with dementia is complex and demanding. Achieving good care in a care home requires relentless energy, enthusiasm and clear leadership.

Dementia care is a fast moving field. There is so much advice it is easy to feel overwhelmed. This guide provides information about best practice based on work in the South West and points you in the direction of where you can find out more.

- ✓ This leaflet for care home managers and providers should be read in conjunction with the [leaflet for care home staff](#).

Dementia: Some basic facts

- ➔ Dementia is an age related condition. The older you are the more likely you are to have dementia.
- ➔ 1 in 16 of people over 65 have dementia, 1 in 4 over 85.
- ➔ Two thirds of people living in care homes are likely to have dementia. Around 40% will be in ordinary care homes which do not have a specialist dementia registration.
- ➔ Almost half of the people with dementia living in care homes will have moderate to severe dementia.

National Dementia Strategy

The National Dementia Strategy, published in February 2009, has a five-year implementation plan. It covers a wide range of services and addresses the different stages of dementia.

In respect to care homes it recommends:

- Identification of a senior staff member within the care home to take the lead to improve the care of people with dementia.
- Development of a strategy in each care home to improve the care of people with dementia
- That antipsychotic medication is used only where necessary.
- Specialist in reach services from community mental health teams to support care homes.
- Support from other in reach services such as primary healthcare.
- Readily available guidance for care home staff on best practice in dementia care.

What is your role in taking forward each of these recommendations and how far have you got?

In the South West we have developed a regional plan to support the implementation of the Strategy. Find out more from the South West Dementia Partnership website www.southwestdementiapartnership.org.uk

- ✓ [Download an in-depth discussion paper about care homes](#), which provides practical tips to improve the care of people with dementia.
- ✓ [Download a self-assessment tool](#) designed to help managers create an action plan to deliver improved dementia care.
- ✓ Participate in the care homes discussion forum to learn from and share what works www.southwestdementiapartnership.org.uk/discussion/

Having a life not just a service

Delivering good quality dementia care is striving to meet people's psychological needs despite the enormous challenges posed by increasing dementia.

Tom Kitwood defined these needs as:

“Comfort, attachment, inclusion, occupation and identity”

Good quality dementia care is about:

- people continuing to have relationships and staff making the extra effort to engage and relate to people with dementia.
- people remaining in control and being supported to do as much for themselves as they can.
- people being active and doing things which give them pleasure.

There are many factors which cause care homes to become institutional and task centred. Often it is when staff are not confident or competent in relating to people with dementia.

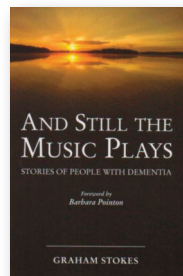
The key role of care home leadership is to define and embed a care home philosophy which is person centred and to ensure all staff have the skills and enthusiasm to deliver it.

And the payoffs?

- ✓ A home which is a pleasure to live in, work in and to manage.
- ✓ A home where people with dementia are more contented and less likely to become anxious and frustrated.
- ✓ A well regarded home with increased enquiries reducing the need for marketing.
- ✓ Increased staff commitment, reducing recruitment costs and the use of agency staff.

Suggested reading

Stokes, G. (2008) [And Still the Music Plays: Stories of People with Dementia](#). Hawker Publications. Series of problem solving stories which highlight the importance on understanding the individuals and seeing problems in the context of people's life histories.



Alzheimer's Society (2007) [Home from Home](#). Alzheimer's Society. Research findings on care home experiences which informed the national dementia strategy.



Where to find out more

The [Dementia Gateway](http://www.scie.org.uk/publications/dementia/) www.scie.org.uk/publications/dementia/ produced by the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) offers high quality information, video and training programmes. There is in depth advice about establishing communication and managing difficult situations.

The [Alzheimer's Society](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk) (www.alzheimers.org.uk, Tel: 020 742 3500) offers a wide range of fact sheets, studies, discussion forums, advice and sources of support.

The [Dementia Information Portal](http://www.dementia.dh.gov.uk) www.dementia.dh.gov.uk is a Department of Health website, which follows the implementation of the National Dementia Strategy. It offers information to anyone with an interest in improving services for people with dementia.

✓ **Remember you can access the Internet for free at local libraries**

Living well with dementia across the South West

www.southwestdementiapartnership.org.uk