

Dementia Specialist Improvement Lead Case Study

Gillian Grubb, Senior Charge Nurse, NHS Fife

Tell us a little about yourself and your current role?

I've worked with people living with dementia since 2009 when I became a Charge Nurse. I was moved to Elmview Ward, Stratheden Hospital in 2011 to assist in the service change and transition of the ward. In line with government guidance the hospital was implementing services changes which affected Elmview – moving from a continuing care to a transitional/interim care ward. At the same time I ensured there was a shift from a task focused to a person-centred approach on the ward.

In 2012 I became the Senior Charge Nurse in Elmview and have continued to evolve the service delivery in the ward. Elmview is now classed as a dementia specialist unit. Most people admitted to the ward display stress and distressed behaviours that cannot be supported elsewhere. Referrals usually come from the older adult acute ward or from a care homes.

Stratheden Hospital is where I've pursued my entire career to date. I'm extremely passionate about Older Adult mental health services, especially dementia.

I'm engaged to be married in 2019 and live happily in Fife with my fiancé Mark and our two Labradors Maxi and Millie.

How would you describe your experience of the Dementia Specialist Improvement Leads programme?

I highlighted my interest the programme as I continually strive for Elmview Ward to become a centre of excellence in dementia care. I was delighted to be accepted for Cohort 2. Through the programme I have enhanced my facilitation skills and developed a working relationship with NHS Education for Scotland (NES). I found it immensely valuable to be able to network with colleagues from other boards, care homes and communities and share knowledge and experiences. The variety of personal attributes and expertise among the members of the Cohort was so beneficial.

What have been the most positive aspects of the programme for you?

I enjoyed the entire 18-month curriculum. I learned so much from each training programme even when I thought I already possessed the knowledge and skills in each area. The scheduling of the master classes allowed me time to digest and reflect on the content of each one. I valued the action learning sets, where we discussed issues and problems relevant to dementia care and our professional roles. I continue to share the good practice and learning with the nursing team and colleagues throughout NHS Fife.

Another positive aspect for me was the opportunity to establish new relationships, especially with NES. The NES facilitators are extremely inspirational and supportive. I now have people I can go to, outside the programme, for advice, resources and support. Through my relationship with NES, I have knowledge of the latest initiatives and policy directives and can share this appropriately with the various working groups I'm involved in to enable continuous service improvement. I've also had the opportunity to assist in the facilitation

of master classes with NES and NHS Fife's Dementia Champions days which has continued to enhance my facilitation skills.

I have increased confidence in my own knowledge and skills. The programme has helped inform my career aspirations and reinforced what I need to do personally and professionally.

What are your plans for taking forward learning from the programme or what changes have you brought about in your practice or working environment?

I have always had a strong interest in education and training. I believe that if staff possess the right knowledge and skills, it can only enrich the experience and enhance the care delivered for patients, relatives and carers. Staff too will benefit through increased job satisfaction and motivation.

A lot of staff training is delivered via learnPro, which has value, but I believe that you cannot underestimate the benefit of face-to-face training. In a supported environment staff can ask questions, discuss issues and create solutions through problem solving and peer support.

My participation in the programme has strengthened my passion for service development and improvement. I have submitted a Situation, Background, Assessment and Recommendation (SBAR)/ business proposal to senior management in Fife to implement a comprehensive education and training programme for all staff, mapped against the Promoting Excellence and Knowledge and Skills frameworks. This includes anyone working with people with dementia – in care homes, community hospitals, health and social care partnerships, dementia champions. The proposal addresses a gap in dementia training provision in relation to the Promoting Excellence framework and the level of skills required.

What do you consider to be your key successes so far?

Currently I am the only active Dementia Specialist Improvement Lead in Fife. My key successes to date are:

- Highlighting to the Board the requirement to invest in training and education and mapping out the key learning for staff using the Promoting Excellence Framework
- Developing a programme for Stress and Distress training based on the Training for Trainers programme provided by NES. We have a six-month programme underway for inpatient and community Older Adult mental health staff.
- Incorporating the Stress and Distress bite-sized modules for health care support workers into our existing dementia skilled training
- Ensuring that my team and I still provide the best possible care on Elmview Ward. This is achieved by using models of improvement such as Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) cycles to make changes within the ward and the increase in therapeutic activities and interventions.
- Maintaining my motivation and passion despite the competing demands within the service and by highlighting my own development needs. I now receive coaching from the NHS Fife Dementia Nurse Consultant which is proving to be enriching and invaluable.