

# Dementia Specialist Improvement Lead Case Study

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## **Tell us a little about yourself and your current role?**

I'm a qualified nurse and began my training and career in Germany which included several years in Acute Psychiatry and Psychotherapy nursing in Hamburg. I came to Scotland in 2003 and worked in a variety of roles in 'older peoples' and dementia care with BUPA care homes, ranging from Staff Nurse to Unit Manager, then Clinical Services Manager and Regional Services Manager.

In 2014 I became the first Admiral Nurse in Scotland for BUPA care homes in cooperation with Dementia UK. My role was to support professional care, promote best practice and liaise with families and carers. In 2017 I joined the Care Inspectorate as an inspector. In this role I inspect a variety of adult services including care at home, care homes and housing support. I cover the areas of Renfrewshire, Inverclyde and Argyll & Bute.

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

Overall, I had a very good experience. The number and variety of training programmes offered was good. The topics were excellent and relevant to all the programme participants and to all types of roles in health and care environments. I enjoyed the Action Learning Groups where we discussed how each of us was applying the practice and learned how we could continue to use Action Learning for our own practice. We worked in a small group and met every two to three months. We also had one-to-one coaching with the NES delivery team.

The ability to meet a broad range of NHS professionals, the opportunity to network with cohort colleagues and the delivery team and learn about what they were doing in their roles and the challenges they faced, all contributed to my experience.

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

It was so beneficial to receive up-to-date knowledge in various aspects of dementia care from experts in the field. I also valued the opportunity to exchange information and knowledge with other practitioners in acute services, NHS community services and care homes. As part of the programme, we each had to work out how we would facilitate that knowledge back in our own work environments with colleagues.

The most interesting part of the programme for me was looking at how people can learn and the similar challenges for people working in health care to learn about dementia. The programme did a good job of highlighting the many ways in which people learn. It doesn't need to take place in a class room – there are other, more flexible options.

Examples included:

- Experiential or immersive learning where the learner experienced the environment like a person with dementia might. This was illustrated through props to simulate and increase awareness of what people living with dementia experience daily.
- Using a variety of media and educational resources such as video, short articles and content that is easy to consume.
- Using a variety of delivery - not necessarily a day-long learning session and combine with Action Learning

**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 changed jobs during the programme to quite a different role. As an Admiral Nurse it was easier to apply the learning from the programme. I used the experiential learning with care homes and encouraged them to look at how to provide better care for people in the late stages of dementia through therapies like Namaste care.

At the Care Inspectorate, improvement work is becoming more important. This means that, in addition to the scrutiny role, I also advise services on best practice such as dementia training. I also highlight ways of working, resources and training that help achieve best practice.

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

To date I would say my key successes are:

- Being able to offer improvement ideas to the adult services in my portfolio such as experiential learning and end-of-life care for people with dementia
- Facilitating what learning can look like and influencing new and more accessible ways of learning for care staff