

Dementia Champion Case Study

Fiona McKelvie, Radiographer, NHS Lanarkshire

Tell us a little about yourself and your current role?

I am one of the Band 6 radiographers. I qualified nine years ago and have been working at Band 6 for four years.

My role is quite varied as I cover a lot of imaging modalities – not just general X-ray, but also CT and MRI scans. I also do mobile and theatre work. The mobile work involves portable x-rays on wards. I also participate in a Cath Lab (cardiac catheterization) where I work with a team, taking images of the coronary arteries in the heart.

As part of my own personal learning and development I did Dementia Friends training and then undertook the Informed about Dementia module.

How would you describe your experience of the Dementia Champions programme?

For me it was an eye-opening experience. I learned things I would never have thought of because my background isn't nursing and I don't work in a ward environment every day. I wanted to take what I had learned back to the Radiology Department and adapt them for our setting. Examples include adapting our behaviour when dealing with patients to prevent them becoming stressed or distressed; interacting with families of people with dementia; and working more collaboratively with carers and relatives.

I also liked the fact that the other participants on the programme were from a variety of disciplines, nurses, and allied health professionals as well as from other public sector organisations such as the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service. It was good to learn with my peers and to make use of their experiences.

I also found it useful to hear about the more personal side of dementia from the perspective of a relative.

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

The teaching staff were brilliant and kept me engaged throughout the programme and wanting to learn more even although the topic of dementia can be a difficult one.

The programme has allowed me to join the Dementia Champion committee at the hospital and become involved in its work. We organised a Christmas Craft and Bake Sale to raise funds which were then donated to local dementia community groups including the Musical Memories choir.

I've had the confidence to lead training and a couple of CPD sessions about working with people with dementia for staff in our department. To date, around twenty-five to thirty colleagues have now completed the 'Informed about Dementia' module.

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 hope that with the knowledge I've gained I can continue to improve my practice and be a role model for other students and newly qualified radiographers coming into our department. I plan to continue with the CPD sessions for staff as well as regular refreshers.

I am now more mindful when working with people with dementia. When they attend appointments, I encourage them to be involved in their treatment and the examination.

More generally, I am actively working more collaboratively with people with dementia, their carers and families.

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

To date my main success has been the implementation of a training plan within the Radiology Department. I hope to continue as a member of the hospital's Dementia Champions committee as it works to make University Hospital Hairmyres a dementia friendly hospital.