
To: Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board (5)

Date: 17th September 2025

Subject: Training and Development for Care Staff Supporting People with Dementia

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 Alzheimer's Society recently published a report '*Because We're Human Too: Why dementia training for care workers matters and how to deliver it*', which expresses concern at low levels of dementia training amongst care staff – 29% nationally.
- 1.2 The report recommends local authorities, when commissioning adult social care services, include a contractual obligation for care providers to ensure staff undertake the Alzheimer's Society's dementia training programme at an annual cost of £2,000 per care home.
- 1.3 This briefing provides assurance to the Scrutiny Board that current training protocols for care homes are robust and appropriate within available resources. While some training delivered or procured by providers may differ in scope from that recommended by the Alzheimer's Society, it nonetheless contributes to enhancing staff knowledge and the overall quality of dementia care.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board (5) are recommended to:
 - 1) Consider the information provided in the briefing note and appendices
 - 2) Identify any further comments or recommendations for the Cabinet Member

3 Background - What is Dementia?

- 3.1 Dementia in its various forms is a debilitating and progressive condition that results in significant cognitive impairment, behavioural and personality changes that can be distressing for the person and their loved ones. While it usually affects older people, it is not a natural and inevitable part of aging.
- 3.2 There are approximately 14 types of dementia conditions of which six are commonly diagnosed and eight are rarer types of dementia. Whilst Alzheimer's disease is the most prevalent, vascular dementia, dementia with Lewy bodies, frontotemporal dementia and mixed dementia (multiple types of dementia) are also commonly diagnosed.
- 3.3 It is also possible for a younger person to develop dementia. When a person develops dementia before the age of 65, this is known as young onset dementia.

- 3.4 In 2024¹ an estimated 3,780 Coventry citizens were living with dementia, of whom 2,249 had a formal diagnosis. By 2040 around 4,800 people are expected to be affected.
- 3.5 Although primarily a condition of older age there are an estimated 80 younger adults with dementia living in the City.
- 3.6 The aim of care and support for people with dementia is to enable them to live well regardless of their circumstances and to ensure appropriate support for their families. This involves ensuring that people with dementia are supported to live their best lives and to maintain independence for as long as possible. People living with dementia have told us that one of the most important things for them was getting to meet someone who had lived with dementia for a while, as soon as possible after their diagnosis. This gave them hope and helped them plan how to make the best of their circumstances and get the support that was right for them. Other important features in good dementia support include depth life story work with plans based around this, dementia-friendly environments, decoding behaviours that challenge on an individual level, understanding the unique health needs and presentations for people with dementia, and supporting the whole family as the condition progresses.
- 3.7 Often family members take on a significant amount of care when a person has dementia and proper support in their role as carers is essential in ensuring their wellbeing. This includes support via breaks, training, peer support and mental health support. Support for families to maintain relationships is important in ensuring everyone's wellbeing when personality and behaviour changes, financial pressures and the stress of caring make this more challenging.
- 3.8 Inevitably much support is provided by paid carers who either support people in their own homes or in accommodation-based settings including care homes and housing with care. Supporting paid carers to improve their relationships with people living with dementia/unpaid carers and to promote independence of those living with dementia is key in delivery of good support.

4 Service Profile

- 4.1 Coventry City Council delivers a number of services that cater specifically for people with dementia namely a residential home, (Eric Williams House) and a specialist award winning Dementia Partnership Hub which was co-designed by people with dementia and brings together a range of services and support in one dementia-friendly building (Maymorn). The Council's six housing with care schemes, although not dementia specific, can cater for people with mild/moderate confusion, similarly the Gilbert Richards Centre provides day opportunities for older people some of whom have mild forms of dementia.
- 4.2 Independent sector providers are commissioned to provide residential and nursing care places for people living with dementia with 25 homes providing approximately 220 places.
- 4.3 An innovation in Coventry is Arden Grove specialist Housing with Care scheme which provides 33 flats for people living with dementia (including 2 short term flats to support people leaving hospital or requiring step up support from the community). This provides an alternative to care home provision when someone living with dementia is unable to stay living at home.
- 4.4 The Council also commissions a wraparound service in the community, delivered by Carers Trust Heart of England that supports people living with dementia to

¹ Source Coventry Market Position Statement

regain a level of independence upon discharge from hospital or to prevent admission to hospital or a care home.

- 4.5 Our independent sector home support services are able to support adults and older people to live well with dementia in their own homes and communities.
- 4.6 Our preventative support grant is used to support people living with dementia through a service currently provided by Coventry and Warwickshire Alzheimer's Society which offers a range of support to people with dementia and their families from pre-diagnosis to end of life. Other preventative support services are also key in supporting people with dementia such as Age UK and Good Neighbours. People in Coventry also benefit from Admiral Nurses, a nurse-led service supporting carers of people with dementia towards end of life.
- 4.7 Many other commissioned services are able to support people with lower levels of confusion who do not require specialist support.

5 Policy and Strategy

- 5.1 National Care Standards require a minimum level of training of care staff new into care through the Care Certificate.
- 5.2 Dementia training is included in the Care Certificate which covers an identified set of standards that health and care professionals must adhere to in their daily working life. This ensures that a basic level of knowledge and awareness is attained by all care staff.
- 5.3 The Care Certificate gives everyone the confidence that health and care professionals have the same introductory skills, knowledge and behaviours to provide compassionate, safe and high-quality care and support in their own particular workplace setting. The Care Quality Commission as regulator of adult social care expects providers to ensure that their staff undertake the training and obtain the certificate or demonstrate equivalent induction and training to the same standards. One of the 15 standards within the Care Certificate is awareness of mental health dementia and learning disability. Importantly these standard state that those staff supporting people with dementia should receive further training and support to enable staff to help people live well.
- 5.4 The national Department of Health and Social Care Dementia Training Standards Framework aims to ensure quality and consistency in dementia education and training. It details the essential skills and knowledge necessary for workers in health, social care, and housing.
- 5.5 Coventry and Warwickshire Dementia Strategy 2022-2027, endorsed on 3rd October 2022 by Cabinet, has, as one of 6 priority areas, "Training Well".
- 5.6 The Training Well objective is that: "We will work to ensure training and awareness opportunities are offered to support communities to increase their awareness of dementia, and that staff who work with people affected by dementia have access to appropriate, accredited training".
- 5.7 The Council is currently working with other agencies in Coventry and Warwickshire to complete the 'Dementia 100' self-assessment tool which supports the implementation of the strategy.

6 Training Offer for Social Care Staff

- 6.1 Where care organisations are providing support, it is clearly imperative that their staff should have appropriate training and development opportunities to enable them to provide the best possible care and support within the normal constraints of financial resources.

6.2 As well as requiring care staff to achieve the national care certificate the following training and development opportunities are available to support knowledge and practice in relation to dementia which can be funded through the Adult Social Care Learning and Development support scheme.

6.3 The table below illustrates available courses, accredited training providers and funding available per candidate:

Award	Training providers	Funding available
Level 2 Award in Awareness of Dementia	City and Guilds Highfield iCQ Innovate Awarding NCFE/CACHE OCN London TQUK	£125
Level 2 Certificate in Dementia Care	TQUK NOCN	£305
Level 3 Award in Awareness of Demetia	BIIAB City and Guilds iCQ NCFE/CACHE OCN London TQUK	£185
Level 3 Certificate in Dementia care	iCQ	£430

6.4 The Learning and Development Support Scheme provides a digital online claims service that allows adult social care employers to claim funding for certain training courses and qualifications on behalf of eligible care staff.

6.5 Providers have accessed webinars delivered by Dementia experts as part of the joint work with the Integrated Care Board. New sessions are being delivered in the coming months including non-pharmaceutical approach to dementia care in October.

6.6 All services can also access Dementia Friends development sessions via local champions as part of the Alzheimer's Society programme. These sessions are available for unpaid carers as well as paid staff and are free to access.

6.7 The Dementia Dictionary is a national dictionary that all services can access and contribute to, building a better understanding about communication for people with dementia.

6.8 Our Quality Assurance team have developed a handbook on non-pharmacological approaches and are delivering training to equip care staff with the skills to support

people with distressed behaviour without resorting to the use of antipsychotics. This will be supported by monthly clinics where providers can bring any situations where they would like advice on supporting someone more effectively without the use of medication to manage behaviour.

7 Quality Assuring Training and Development of Care Staff

- 7.1 The Care Quality Commission is responsible for ensuring provider compliance with care standards including ensuring that staff are appropriately trained.
- 7.2 Coventry City Council, in partnership with Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Commissioning Board, jointly assure the quality of contracted services and those provided directly by the Council. The quality assurance approach includes checks of providers' training matrices which capture the planned and delivered training including that in relation to caring for people living with dementia.
- 7.3 Evidence is triangulated from other sources, for example, conversations with staff, checks of supervision records and other documentary evidence. Where providers fall short corrective action is required by given deadlines.
- 7.4 Youell Court care home in Binley is an example of good practice in its application of the Butterfly Scheme. This scheme is a program designed to help staff care for people with dementia or memory impairment. It involves using a blue butterfly symbol to identify people, allowing staff to provide appropriate support and care. The scheme also includes a training program for staff to learn how to deliver best care for people including using communication strategies and adapting tasks. The scheme empowers people living with dementia and their carers to choose the care they want, allowing for a more personalised approach.
- 7.5 The Virtual Dementia Tour is available for purchase anywhere in the UK via one of 9 mobile dementia simulators (Bus) or in-house training using 2 rooms. This worldwide, scientifically and medically proven method of giving a person with a healthy brain an experience of what dementia might be like, allows delegates to enter the world of the person and understand which simple changes need to be made to their practice and environment to really improve the lives of people with dementia. Invented 25 years ago in America and owned by Second Wind Dreams, Training 2 CARE are the UK partners and pioneers in this country. The Virtual Dementia Tour has now been proven during research produced by Ulster University to change practice within 95% of delegates, improve knowledge in 97% of delegates and improve outcomes for 100% of clients. Costs are from £1,040 for 16 people and £1,140 for 32 people.

8 National Alzheimer's Society Position

- 8.1 The Alzheimer's Society have published a report '*Because We Are Human Too: Why Dementia Training for Care Workers Matters, And How to Deliver It*' outlining their position that enough is not being done nationally in terms of training and development opportunities for care workers. (See Appendix 1)
- 8.2 The report notes that only 29% of all carers have received formal dementia training and advises that national and local decision-makers, and care providers, take urgent steps to improve dementia training, and help ensure that people living with dementia consistently receive the care they deserve. It also calls for:
 - Training in dementia made mandatory for the social care workforce
 - Implementation of dementia-specific contractual and commissioning provisions

- Implementation of evidence informed key components

9 The Local Position

- 9.1 Coventry providers have been made aware of the training offer from the national Alzheimer's Society to enable them to make a decision around purchasing this additional support for their staff.
- 9.2 Coventry benefits from having 50%² of **all** care staff in the wider care and support market having received formal dementia training thus exceeding national performance by a wide margin. Note that this figure includes staff who do not work directly with people with dementia. Our quality assurance processes provide assurance that the proportion is far higher amongst dementia specialist service staff.
- 9.3 Coventry Council and Coventry and Warwickshire ICB are currently encouraging our providers to participate in a national study with Leeds Beckett University and the Alzheimer's Society to identify the gaps in training nationally and look at ways to improve this across the sector.

10 Conclusion

- 10.1 Adult Social Care are assured that levels of dementia training amongst Coventry's whole adult social care workforce exceed those cited nationally, and that for those working directly with people with dementia, our workforce has good levels of awareness and understanding of how to provide good dementia care.
- 10.2 The availability of what is essentially free training for providers as outlined in the table at paragraph 3.24 is a comprehensive offer to support staff working with those living with dementia. The training can be supported by further "on the job" development opportunities.
- 10.3 It would be inappropriate and not enforceable for us to contractually obligate providers to use one specific training provider, and this could potentially lead to additional costs being passed onto the Council during challenging financial times.
- 10.4 We remain committed to ensuring our wider workforce is well-positioned to provide good dementia care and alongside ensuring minimum training standards are met, we will continue to promote opportunities for additional training including the Alzheimer's Society's offer, to ensure the quality of support for people living with dementia in Coventry continuously improves.

11 Health Inequalities Impact

- 11.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was produced for the Dementia Strategy which incorporates "Training Well".

Appendix 1: Because We Are Human Too; Why Dementia Training for Care Workers Matters, And How to Deliver It

Appendix 2: Presentation

Name of Author: Sharon Atkins

Job: Joint Commissioning Manager – Dementia and Mental Health

Contact details: Sharon.Atkins@coventry.gov.uk 02476 977130

² Source Skills for Care