Supporting and Further Developing the Championing of Best Practice in Workforce Development.

Developing Dementia Care Champions in Domiciliary Care Services

Introduction & Background
Supported by funding from Progress South Central, this project aims to:
1. Map current local vocational programmes that support the development of Dementia Champions within domiciliary care
2. Identify a pathway within the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care and Children and Young People’s Services that could support the development of a dementia champion within domiciliary care.
3. Map the learning outcomes of chosen programmes to the QCF with specific reference to the underpinning knowledge of the dementia units offered within level 5 Diploma Leadership in Health and Social Care and Children’s and Young People’s Services
4. Review and evaluate programmes to ensure fitness for purpose and that they meet the needs of the newly emerging role of the dementia champion
5. Develop a business case for commissioning purposes to show how domiciliary care and community support services could be supported by the role of dementia champions

A previous report has covered points 1 to 3 listed above; this report goes into the review and evaluation of the programmes designed to support the development of dementia care champions in the community and the business case for the development of this role

Review and evaluate programmes to ensure fitness for purpose and that they meet the needs of the newly emerging role of the dementia champion.

In the previous report for this project a number of training programmes that could be used to develop dementia champions in the work place were identified. These included Foundation Degrees in Health & Social Care (both specific to dementia and generic) and vocational courses.

The focus of the programmes all varied, but a key feature involves developing one person as a lead in dementia care, through enhancing their understanding of current approaches to dementia care and their ability to influence others to improve their understanding and skills.

National & Regional approaches to developing dementia champions
The National Dementia Strategy (Ref 1) recognises that workforce development is a key requirement to support people living well with dementia. Objective 13: An informed and effective workforce for people with dementia – states that:

“All health and social care staff involved in the care of people who may have dementia to have the necessary skills to provide the best quality of care in the roles and settings where
they work. To be achieved by effective basic training and continuous professional and vocational development in dementia”

The notion of a dementia champion / lead in the workplace is then identified within Objective 8, as a means to improve dementia care within general hospitals. An example job description of a dementia champion within a general hospital setting is included as Appendix 1 of this report.

Responding to the workforce requirements of the National Dementia Strategy has been the focus of many health and social care providers across the country, with some regions taking the opportunity to develop a coherent approach to dementia care workforce development, including developing the role of “Dementia Champions”.

For example in the North West, Skills for Care along with the Joint Improvement Partnership, as part of their dementia workforce development project, commissioned activity to:

- Scope the regional workforce and existing care pathways to identify the level(s) of training, awareness raising or support required by both health and social care staff and those caring for people with dementia
- Map the existing education or training currently available to support health and social care staff working with people with dementia and their carers
- Identify areas of learning and development that are not currently available.

These reports can be found at: [http://northwest.skillsforcare.org.uk/news/news_archive/Mapping_report_identifies_key_training_recommendations_for_the_North_West_dementia_workforce.aspx](http://northwest.skillsforcare.org.uk/news/news_archive/Mapping_report_identifies_key_training_recommendations_for_the_North_West_dementia_workforce.aspx)

A significant recommendation from the project was that every health and social care provider should identify and develop a dementia lead or champion.

It was suggested that the role would need:

- To be present within every care home, domiciliary care agency, GP Practice, Community Hospital etc. Where appropriate, this might become a contractual requirement.
- A clear role description to be developed, to include a responsibility for supporting the dementia development of other staff.
- Appropriate training pathways being offered for such a role, which might include the development of trainer training or coaching skills.

The current stage of the project involves supporting 31 organisations to carry out a variety of methods of developing and supporting dementia care champions. The full results, due out soon, will include a directory of projects, listing planned outcomes, actions and results, specific training used and approaches to sustainability. In addition there will be 9 case studies, which go into greater detail and illustrate successful approaches taken by a sample of projects representing a range of different health and social care service providers.

**Approaches to developing dementia champions in the South East**

For this project the programmes chosen have been reviewed and evaluated because:

- Domiciliary Care workers are amongst the recent cohort
The programmes reflect a range of options that Domiciliary Care providers may wish to consider to develop dementia champions within their services.

Where appropriate, the programme has already been mapped to the level 5 Diploma in Leadership in Health & Social Care and Children’s and Young People’s Services during the first part of this project.

The programmes include:

• An "Aspiring Dementia Leads Programme" – using the level 3 Certificate in Dementia Care as a framework.
• “Person Centred Care for those Living with Dementia” - Foundation Degree Module, level 5, worth 20 credits
• A Foundation Degree in Health & Social care – level 5
• Skills for Facilitating Learning in Dementia – a foundation degree module, level 6, 20 credits.

To complete this review the following activities were carried out:

• A meeting was held with a group of participants to help develop the questions to use for the review
• An evaluation report was requested from the programme providers
• Contact was made with any participants from domiciliary care services
• Employers / managers of participants were interviewed
• A group involving people living with dementia were asked what they felt was important when developing dementia champions / leads
• A visit to a day centre where one of the delegates worked.
• A project in the North West Region of Skills for Care was researched.

Thank you to all those consulted who gave their time and were willing to share their personal experiences and expertise to inform this report.

Fit for purpose programmes to develop dementia care champions

To inform this section of the project the following areas were focused on:

With employers:

• Why they decided to develop someone as a dementia champion / lead?
• What they felt the benefits were of doing this?
• Did they have examples of job / role description?
• Why did they decide on the particular development programme they did?
• What impact / outcomes have they noticed as a result of the training, if possible covering:
  o The support of those living with dementia
  o The worker involved in the programme
  o Other workers

With the programme participants:

• What was expected of them as dementia lead / champion?
• How did the programme they attend support this?
• What will / have they done to apply the programme in practice – have they any examples of improved outcomes for people living with dementia?
• What do they feel they have gained from the training?
• How do they feel their role as champion may develop?

The overall review of the programmes has been very positive. Although this review has taken place early in the development of the courses (the first time delivered for some) the participants contacted and their employers felt the programmes had an immediate effect on the participants and in some cases had already been directly applied to practice.

This review highlighted the following:

• Often the Dementia Champion / Lead did not have a job role defined. In some cases this led to a lack of clarity about what was expected and the ongoing support and development needed. However the tendency was for dementia champion to have a role in:
  o Assessing clients with dementia
  o Problem solving when there was behaviour staff and carers were finding difficult
  o Training and supporting other staff and in some cases carers
  o Reviewing procedures and polices to ensure a more person-centred approach

Some examples of what the dementia champion role in social care might cover is included as Appendix 2

• The dementia champions, who were not managers, felt it was vital to have the manager’s support and willingness to implement ideas.

• Programmes were not always promoted as a means to develop dementia champions / leads, but many of the participants were attending with this in mind

• It is useful to have a range of different learning pathways available, with the learning outcomes made very clear. This allows the employers / potential participants to select the most appropriate programme, for example does the programme provide updates on dementia care and opportunity to develop training / coaching skills or just one of these topics?

• Information on the link / opportunity to gain further qualifications would be useful.

• Although some element of action / forward planning was a feature of the programmes, in some cases the participants did not use this to identify their own ongoing development as a dementia champion. This was not the case with one programme where there were regular follow up meetings planned in the year following the course and in another programme the participants were considering how to support each other after the course.

• Different aspects of the course were seen as most useful:
  o Having up-to-date knowledge about dementia
  o The input on person-centred approaches,
  o The opportunity to reflect using case studies and examples from their own support / care experiences
  o Practical / creative ways to support those living with dementia.
  o Workbooks covering basic information to refer to and to use to develop others
  o Being able to have ‘face to face’ discussions with others to ‘bounce ideas around’

• The participants were keen to implement change and try out what they had learnt and the understanding they had developed. The following are a few examples of what had been implemented:
  o Set up memory boxes within the person’s home
Developed an in-house course for care workers and a leaflet covering basic information on dementia.

Reviewed care / support plans to include more person centred questions and prompts

Used some of the case studies and exercises with other staff to develop their understanding of behaviour and living with dementia

Started to develop a ‘resource library’ to use for staff development

Considering a forum / blog for care staff to use to share ideas and information

When providing personal care to a particular client humming a tune they like, so they join in.

Presenting at the local Alzheimer’s café and the patient participation group at the GP practice

The following were the themes identified as important aspects of any programme to develop dementia champions (in no specific order)

- The providers of the programme needed to be “tried and trusted providers”. People often selected the programme because they “know them as good providers with up to date practitioner input”.

- The importance of understanding what is meant by person-centred care and support, with real examples of how to apply this in practice and time for the participant’s to reflect on this in their own work environment.

- An element of updating the participant’s knowledge of dementia and current approaches to care and support. “I have always worked with people with physical or learning disabilities and now we are seeing clients developing dementia and requiring different skills amongst the staff.”

- Opportunity to reflect on case studies and own approaches “I found this really interesting and made me think more about the person and what they needed”

- Ways to develop skills in supporting the learning of others “I am looking forward to sharing the learning, and being able to develop other staff.

- Being part of a group which involved presenting and discussing topics allowed participants to develop confidence and in some cases the assertiveness needed to influence and change practice.

- Practical ways of supporting people that could be easily applied in practice – e.g. “putting in place memory boxes within someone’s own home so staff can sit and chat as they go through them”, “knowing that someone use to always polish their shoes and just wanted a cloth to polish his shoes”

- Right balance of academic and practical “having the researched background does give the work some authority…… but I also need to be able to apply this in practice”
Opportunity to put learning into action in the workplace with the support of the manager to do this. “Having the action plan we developed as part of the programme helped me”

Some dementia champions were interested in any opportunity there might be to gain a qualification / credit values as part of the programme.

Consideration given to the role of the dementia champion and how to follow up and support the champions once the programme was finished, for example keeping in contact with the other participants or linking into other groups / networks.

It is suggested that these themes could be developed into a guide for employers / potential dementia champion as they select which training programme might suit their requirements. These could also be shared with training providers to ensure that these are features of any programme.

The business case for developing dementia champions
During this review the following reasons were given for developing a dementia champion

- **Building Capacity** - The increase in people living with dementia means that dementia care is and will continue to be a high percentage of service provided, “so it made sense for us as a Dom care service to develop a specialist amongst the staff”. Having a dementia champion is seen as an important part of developing the service “to be able to offer more dementia care / support in the future”. Having a colleague develop as lead / champion has worked in the past for other areas, such as health and safety, infection control, manual handling”. This also takes some of the workload away from the manager, to enable them to “delegate certain activities to the champion”

- **People being able to stay in their own homes** – the dementia champions felt that their role to develop staff and providing a more person-centred approach could result in someone being able to stay in their own home longer. “My own father is in a care home and I have noticed his condition deteriorate as his care is very ‘task oriented’. We are supporting people in their own home and I have noticed ‘less deterioration in health’ when focussing on the person rather than the task”

- **Quality of service** – one dementia champion felt that they had managed to increase client’s independence. A manager felt more able to deliver the service she felt was right, rather than what was being commissioned (“I felt more able to challenge too short a time allocated for supporting people with dementia”). A dementia champion felt that they were able to support staff to all be “on the same wavelength” in the way they support people living with dementia. The person-centred approaches being advocated within the development programmes also had a “spin off” for other service provision, “using a person-centred approach is positive for all”.

- **Promoting the service to staff and clients** - Having a dementia champion has been useful when promoting the services, as “potential clients have seen that our service is willing to invest in staff development and dementia care”. The opportunity this provided
staff was also seen as important. It allowed the managers to “develop good staff where there are not many chances to promote someone into a management role”. Champions were also excited about their roles and felt motivated to “apply their learning in practice”. One participant also commented that her approach to staff had become more ‘person-centred’, “working with people’s strengths and being more open to ideas can be applied to staff as well as the people living with dementia”

- **Cost effective learning & development** – dementia champions were keen to cascade their learning to others and this was seen as an important part of their role. Staff that have developed as champions reported an *increase in their confidence* and in many cases were able to see the *effect their learning had on the care and support* provided. Champions spoke about the way they were “used to problem solve” and “support understanding and management of behaviour” that was challenging staff and carers; not only in their own services, but in some cases within other services as well.

- **The support of carers and the wider community** - an interesting “added value” was that some champions were actively *sharing their learning within the wider community*: speaking at local clubs and public meetings (one dementia champion also presented at an Alzheimer’s Dementia Café and at the patients participation group within the local GP practice), supporting carers and in one case going into a care home to support a former client settle in during a respite stay. One carer had also been supported by a dementia champion to expect more from other care providers, “rather than always being focused on doing tasks”

- **Practical Support** – many champions had started to apply their learning in very practical ways. This included:
  - Training staff / carers, formally or informally
  - Collating resources for staff development
  - Assessing clients
  - Reviewing policies
  - Starting ‘memory boxes’ and other techniques to engage with the person with dementia
  - Reviewing care planning formats

**Recommendations:**

The recommendations from the first part of this project were:

Consideration needs to be given to the development of further options within the level 5 Diploma in Leadership in Health and Social Care and Children’s and Young People’s Services

A suggestion would be that there are 3 areas of development:

1. Clinical / area of specialism
2. Research skills, development and practice (contextualised in individual’s own practice)
3. Reflective practice

As specific Learning Outcomes for the FDSc Social Care and Health Practice (Dementia) emerge these should be mapped to the Qualifications Credit Framework (QCF) and vice versa.
Further work is required to map QCF credits and HE to enable any credit transfer and to clarify Recognising Prior Learning opportunities from QCF units to HE units and qualifications.

The above have already been fed back to Skills for Care and Development as a result of this project.

**The following additional recommendations are also suggested:**

- This project and the learning from the North West project is shared with dementia leads and commissioners in the South East, including the Health and Social Care Partnership (formerly the Joint Improvement Partnership). One consideration may be to suggest the development of dementia champions in all services.

- A simple guide for employers is developed from this report, covering:
  - The benefits of developing dementia champions
  - The important features of any programme used to support the dementia champion
  - The training pathways available
  - The qualification options available (QCF and Foundation Degree routes)
  - Any job role descriptions that emerge as they are developed
  - Case studies from this project.

  This could be promoted through Skills for Care networks and dementia leads events.

- The emerging network of “dementia champions” is supported by the Skills for Care lead covering dementia care workforce development. This will be an e-network in the first instance and could be used to share resources and information such as job descriptions and competencies as they develop.

- The existing Dom care dementia care champions are made aware of the advanced practice option within the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership for Health and Social Care and Children and Young People’s Services. The themes identified as important in any dementia champion development programme are shared with training providers.

- This project and the resulting guides are presented by the RDO at the Progress South Central Health and Social Care Forum (17th May 2011) and the Dementia Services Development Centre Conference in July and as appropriate to network and sub group meetings. An article which has already been published through the Sussex Learning Network, is included as Appendix 3

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APPENDIX 1

JOB DESCRIPTION – Dementia Champion

ROLE SUMMARY
The purpose of the role is to raise awareness of dementia within the ……………….and to improve the quality of care for people with dementia on the wards, in all hospital departments, improving clinical outcomes, maintain of function and patient experience, and reducing length of stay and readmission. This is Objective 8 of the National Dementia Strategy (DH 2009) and one of the top 4 priority areas identified in the follow up document published in 2010.

Key tasks include:
- To lead the dementia care audit within ……….. and work with the acute hospital workforce to improve dementia coding.
- To set up a Dementia Steering Group in order to formulate and lead an action plan for improving dementia care within the hospitals, taking into account the findings from both the National Dementia Audit and the local audit.
- To lead the development of care pathways for people with dementia within both acute hospitals, working closely with the Clinical Dementia Leads and any existing/new Mental Health Liaison or Shared Care Ward services.
- To provide clinical leadership, support and advice to the acute hospital workforce in the management of dementia, the development of acute hospital treatment/care plans, and discharge planning.
- To provide active liaison with primary, secondary and community dementia services in order to facilitate improved communication and seamless care pathways to enhance care within the acute trust and facilitate early discharge with sufficient support and re-ablement to prevent unnecessary re-admission.
- To provide support and advice to the mental health liaison team to facilitate discharge for patients with complex needs.
- To provide support, information and advice to carers and families.
- To contribute in training in dementia care and management for the acute hospital workforce.
- To provide quarterly progress reports.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
Clinical
- To promote high quality clinical care for people with dementia across all departments, making sure that dementia is everybody’s business, not somebody else’s business.
- To provide support and advice to the ward team, hospital departments, discharge team and mental health liaison team for planning the care of people with dementia with complex needs.
- To be actively involved in in-patient care, liaising with ward staff to ensure high quality nursing care.
- To develop care of patients with dementia in the emergency department, to ensure rapid recognition and basic assessment of cognitive impairment and provision of high quality nursing and medical care.
• To support complex transfers to care homes, liaising across boundaries to promote high quality care and communication. To ensure good links with internal Discharge Co-ordinators and key primary care staff.
• To work with the multidisciplinary team to implement and evaluate advance care planning for care home residents in hospital, particularly for patients with dementia and cognitive impairment.
• To provide expert nursing advice and support to patients, their families and other healthcare professionals following diagnosis and through treatment.
• To ensure continuity of a high standard of evidence based nursing care, assessing health, health related and nursing needs of patients, their families and other carers by identifying and initiating appropriate steps for effective care.
• To follow-up patients as appropriate and ensure all relevant information is available to enable patients to make an informed choice about their treatment.
• To lead the identification and development of clinical protocols and strategies to enhance both the continuity and standard of specialist care whilst ensuring equity of access to the service.
• To ensure all care is given in accordance with agreed protocols.
• To liaise with local community, social services, paramedics and voluntary organisations in order to develop existing services for clients, carers and health professional.
• To actively involve service users in providing feedback of their experience of the current service and suggestions for improvements.
• To support service and practice development projects relating to people with dementia and advise on further resources inside and outside the Trust as appropriate.
• To provide advice as required both internally and externally.

Management
• To lead the dementia care audit within ………. And work with the acute hospital workforce to improve dementia coding.
• To work closely with the multidisciplinary team and clinical teams in order to develop best practice and ensure consistency practice.
• To set up a Dementia Steering Group in order to formulate and lead an action plan for improving dementia care within the hospitals, taking into account the findings from both the National Dementia Audit and the local audit.
• To lead the development of care pathways for people with dementia within …………. working closely with the Clinical Dementia Leads and any existing/new Mental Health Liaison or Shared Care Ward services.
• To provide clinical leadership, support and advice to the acute hospital workforce in the management of dementia, the development of acute hospital treatment/care plans, and discharge planning.
• To maintain active liaison with primary, secondary and community dementia services in order to facilitate improved care pathways and early discharge.
• To provide quarterly progress reports.
• To play an integral role in the operational and strategic development of specialist service, both in and out patients.
• To develop policies and protocols to improve patient care for patients with dementia and other cognitive impairments.
• To liaise effectively with all other disciplines within in the Trust and at local level.
• To initiate and participate in the management of change to improve standards and communication links.
• To contribute positively to the leadership of nursing within the division acting as an effective role model.
• To work with and support managers and clinical staff to identify areas where changes in practice are required.
• To introduce measures to actively manage and reduce risk to patients. Ensure the formal reporting and recoding of adverse incidents in line with Trust policy.
• To network with other specialists within the Trust to evaluate, develop and promote the champion role.
• To utilise and maintain information systems to aid audit and to provide regular actively analysis reports.
• To maintain records and send reports set by various bodies pertaining to the specific speciality.
• To maintain contemporaneous and accurate treatment records, submitting relevant statistics, reports and activity data as requested.
• To evaluate the service in terms of clinical effectiveness, clinical excellence and value for money.
• To ensure the best use of available resources is used within agreed budget to provide a cost effective service.
• To forge effective links within primary secondary and tertiary care to ensure effective communication.
• To forge effective links with patient groups and voluntary organisations, including Alzheimer’s society Age Concern.
• To ensure compliance with the Trust’s Equality and Diversity Policy, supporting the delivery of the Trusts Race Equality Scheme and the Trust’s duty to positively promote race equality and equality of opportunity for disabled people ensuring services are responsive to the needs of equality groups.

Education and research
• Lead the agreed dementia audit and provide reports outlining the results.
• Represent ..........at external Boards.
• In collaboration with ..........further develop and deliver a training programme for staff coming into contact with people with dementia so that they can recognise & respond to the needs of the individual appropriately, with specific focus on acute medicine, elderly care and the emergency departments
• To provide information for clients, carers and health professionals about all aspects of caring for older people with dementia.
• To ensure appropriate information and educational literature is available to help patients and their families make informed choices as to their treatment plan and continuing management including advance care planning.
• To act as a clinical expert and advise on educational opportunities that will facilitate the development and support of their specialist knowledge and skills to ensure they develop their clinical practice.
  • To contribute to the development of nursing practice within the division.
  • To work with and support ward managers, matrons and other clinical staff to identify areas where changes to practice are required. Also where opportunities exist to improve treatment and support for patients with dementia.
  • To actively participate in educational events provided by the Trust and primary care sector.
  • To attend meetings and conferences as appropriate ensuring that you are fully conversant with current issues both within the Trust and within the specialist services locally and nationally.
  • Ensure patient experience surveys are completed and action plans developed.
• To identify, apply and disseminate research findings relating to specialist nursing practice.
• To participate and assist with any Trust approved research projects conducted within the department.
• To publish and present relevant clinical practice and service developments.

PERSON SPECIFICATION
Dementia Champion

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<th>Essential</th>
<th>Desirable</th>
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<td>Registered health professional</td>
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<td>A clinical expert either through formal qualification (Masters) and/or extensive clinical experience pertinent to the area</td>
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<td>Strong leadership skills, ability to motivate and influence staff</td>
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<td>Management or leadership course (or working towards)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Higher Degree (MSc) or equivalent in a health related subject, or working towards</td>
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<td>Experience in interagency working</td>
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<td>Relevant post-registration experience working with patients with dementia</td>
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<td>Excellent oral and written communication skills including presentations and publications</td>
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<td>Ability to build up a rapport with patients and the MDT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relevant, demonstrable experience in specialty area</td>
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<td>Ability to impart complex information to patients, relatives and carers, with different levels of understanding</td>
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<td>Demonstrates awareness of priorities, deals with workload, adapts to changing requirements, and uses initiative</td>
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<td>Demonstrable experience of developing policies and procedures</td>
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<td>Ability to work independently and as part of a team as well as across departmental, organisational and professional boundaries</td>
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<td>Computer literacy</td>
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<td>Patient centred approach</td>
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Appendix 2

3. Possible role for Dementia Champions – Stockport Council

2. Dementia Champion – Kirklees Council

Anyone who works with people with dementia who has a passion and desire to improve the quality of services and improve people’s lives to enable them to “live well with dementia”. It does not matter what your job role is whether you are a cook, manager or administrator – promoting good dementia care is your job. Our aim is that all staff will register to become a Dementia Champion and every organisation / team will have a least one Dementia Champion attending the network meetings to represent their team.

The dementia champion programme aim is to develop in-house leaders to champion good dementia care in their place of work, training them in best practice care for dementia sufferers and in how to lead and train others in their place of work.
The role of the Dementia Champion is to:

- be a “guide, supporter, inspirer, monitor, mentor, change agent”
- challenge bad practice (appropriately)
- see the person first
- lead by example and model good practice
- support relatives and carers
- share information and knowledge
- raise awareness

For further information: http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/community/care-support/health/mentalhealth/Dementia.shtml

3. Dementia Champion – Salford Council

- Liaising with family members and visitors and being the main point of contact for any queries regarding dementia
- To be responsible for updating staff on any current information regarding dementia
- Be a port of call for staff to discuss issues they may be finding in their day to day work
- Identifying training needs of relevant staff
- To be a mentor for the rest of the team
- To support and coach staff in dealing with any situation that may be challenging to them
- To support and coach staff in putting the training into practice
- To feedback their activities relating to Dementia to the Partnership
- To assess and record whether the training has impacted on the people you support
- To attend network/peer support groups organised by the partnership
- Assist in the roll out of the in-house training programme

4. Example Dementia Champion – Dom care

- Champion to undertake an approved "Train the Trainer Dementia Awareness" Course
- To cascade training to all front-line staff in dementia awareness.
- To evaluate the training given to staff to indicate their awareness and knowledge gained
- To effectively implement the “awareness/ knowledge” direct to clients suffering this illness
- To endeavour to involve carers (other than our staff) e.g main carer/ relatives also involved in the care in the training
- To evaluate how the training has impacted on the client and outcome achieved
- To review / monitor and regularly update dementia training
- To gain more awareness as an agency and to become specialised in this field
Northbrook College and CWL pioneer new training in dementia care

“This course really challenges us in the care sector and sometimes it makes you question what you thought you knew or believed.”

There are an estimated 820,000 people living with dementia in the UK, and a new Centre for Work and Learning course at Northbrook College is training professionals in the very latest techniques to support them to be actively involved in their own care.

Skills for Care, the Sector Skills Council for Social Care, is looking to establish a network of Dementia Care Champions across the county, who will take the lead on this area of work, raising the profile, inspiring others around them and training their own teams to follow the best practice models that they have been trained in.

‘Person Centred Care for those Living with Dementia’, the new short course at Northbrook College, is designed specifically to support those Managers who will be taking on the role of dedicated lead in this area of work.

Karen Stevens, Regional Development Officer at Skills for Care welcomed this new initiative. She said “there are very flat career structures in Social Care and courses such as this open up specialist practitioner routes. We need more advanced practitioners in dementia care”. She invited the students completing the course to become some of the very first members of a
network of Dementia Leads across the South East.

The five students completing the pilot course at Northbrook College are all senior managers within their organisations. They were very positive about doing the course and clear about the impact it would have on their organisations. “This has been very useful – I can now establish a focused team to work in the community” said one Manager who works for Leonard Cheshire Disability. “People think of Leonard Cheshire as only working with those with physical disabilities, but more and more of our clients also have Dementia and this will really help us to know how to care for them better. I need to be able to retrain my staff into new ways of working.”

Students talked about how much the course had inspired them, not only enhancing their knowledge and understanding of dementia, but making them critically evaluate their own practice and that of those around them.

“This course really challenges us in the care sector and sometimes it makes you question what you thought you knew or believed.” says a Manager who works in Domiciliary Care – an area that he feels has sometimes been neglected in other training courses with their traditional focus on Residential Care. “The learning that we have received here on Person Centred Care techniques is so valuable and transfers to so many other areas of work that the course will help us not just to care for those with dementia, but to also improve our care processes generally.”

The students, who will complete their training course by the end of May, were all proud of their achievements, and the fact that the course they have undertaken is awarded by the University of Brighton.

“The academic side really does validate it as a training course” said one of the students, “and the assignment that we have to do makes you look at the work we have been introduced to in more depth and detail and makes you put your learning into practice.”

They would all recommend this course to others and will be returning to their own settings where they can’t wait to cascade the new techniques they have learned, down to their own staff.

To find out more about when the next session of ‘Person Centred Care for those Living with Dementia’ is due to begin, please contact Selina Shields Bishop on: s.bishop@nbcol.ac.uk or call 01903 607 218

References
1. Living Well with Dementia: a National Dementia Strategy
2. Skills for Care and North West Joint Improvement Partnership